

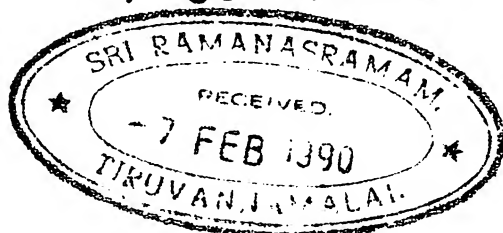
LUMINOUS EYE

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RATNA MA NAVARATNAM

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FOREWORD

Smt. Ratna Ma Navaratnam is a scholar who hails from Sri Lanka. She has authored many books, some of which have been published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Thiruvacavam has been her favourite subject. In this volume she is discussing the concept of "Luminous Eye". I am indeed thankful to her for having requested me to give a Foreword to this scholarly work.

Dr. Wisner S. Cerve, discussing the concept of the third eye in his book, "Lemuria - the Lost Continent of the Pacific" says :

"It was common place for the Lemurian to close his two physical eyes and to stand still at any moment of the daily activities and focalize his consciousness upon the centre of his forehead and receive an impression that might have been translated into one of sight, or smell or hearing, or feeling or tasting".

He has further observed that the Lemurian, however, used this special faculty not for local impressions or for purely intimate matters, but for long distance impressions; it is recorded that through the use of this faculty he could see or sense by smell or sound, some dangerous animal at a very great distance.

Plato has pointed out that the Atlanteans too had this faculty of "third eye". The Kumari Kandam people of ancient time possessed the faculty of third eye. That is why they could migrate to other lands when they had the vision of the submergence of their own land.

Luminous Eye is the nomenclature given by the author to the Third Eye of Lord Siva. This eye, called "Netrik Kann" is identified with Siva. Poet Saint Nakirar was given the vision of the "Netrik Kann" of Siva when the latter came to the support of Darumi; yet Nakirar refused to recant his decision. Such was the firmness of ancient saints when they strongly

upheld just causes in defence of truth. The Hindu tradition stressed on the adherence to Dharma in all walks of life. Moral law was the all-important and all-prevailing factor in social life.

Saivism extols as one of its salient sparks the entrancing luminescence of Arul - Grace Divine. The Srutis and Agamas and the Saiva Canonical Texts proclaim its Supreme Glory. This resplendent halo of Light of Siva emanating from the Third Eye and Radiant feet is the only pathway for bhaktas seeking the final liberation of the soul from the triple bonds.

The pursuit of a jnani or a man of knowledge is to lift himself out of his ignorance, to awaken in him a higher consciousness of mind, which will lead him to discover, know, realise and participate in the inner harmonies of the mighty forces governing his life-activity, in such a way as to attain progressively the inner fulfilment in himself - paramasugam or anandam.

Yoga is a device for developing inner discipline. The path of Kriya brings about total emancipation, by conforming, not only to inner discipline, but also to the observance of external disciplines. Man should strike a balance between the cultivation of spirituality and its external projection. Community worship at home and in temples are necessary tools to forge ahead with the ideal of one-world humanity and one-God who resides in the heart of His Fellow beings. Sarya deals with the details of worship and codes of conduct which an aspirant should follow. A wealth of symbolism is embodied in the rituals of worship. Man obtains a stronger psychic force by the observance of the rules and performance of the rituals laid down in the Agamas.

A Saivite should concentrate and analyse himself and his mental faculties. Then he has to discover his limitations, mental and moral, and grow in self-awareness; and with it should develop an extra-sensory perception which would bring about the self-revelation that would lead to Self-Realization.

No amount of theorising can bring to light the Truth of these experiences, unless and until they are revealed. That is perhaps the reason why Meikanda Sastras and Treatises on the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam, valuable as they are, cannot supplant the revelatory and direct experiences

of Reality communicated by the Thevaram Seers. They speak in a mysterious - yet convincing - language of the knowledge of the spirit as integral intuition of the truth of existence at its source. Such wisdom shows us the way to attain the freedom of the self.

The seeker begins to understand better the inner spiritual laws. Spiritual knowledge comprises a series of experiences distinguished by the stages of knowing. These stages are linked to the stages of perception in empirical life. Man's third eye, no longer dormant, gets illumined by the light of Siva's Triple Eye.

By their Yogic insights, the Nayanmar lament that the world does not know that Grace in essence is omnipresent. To those who know its essence, grace tastes like nectar. The grace of Siva represented by the Third Eye sees everything in totality and simultaneously. The Truth-seekers know that Arul-Sakti becomes the Eye (Arulkann) and sees all in unison.

The author thus discusses the pathways, drawn by the seers of yore, which lead man to the ultimate realisation of the Godhead. Their experiences need to be interpreted and understood correctly.

I am happy that this book is published by the International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilizations in an attempt to educate those interested on the correct meaning and purpose of the writings of the ancient sages.

Smt. Ratna Ma Navaratnam has brought out all aspects of the concept of the Luminous Eye in a manner worthy of appreciation.

I am confident that those who are interested in Saivaite Philosophy will find the book useful.

N. MAHALINGAM



Chapter 1

LUMINOUS INSIGHTS

The Indian Seer viewed Philosophy as a darsana, a vision of Truth. It is the third Eye of Siva that we need to see His vision of Reality. What does the third Eye of Siva signify? It transmits the ethos of the qualitative view of life of all animate and inanimate beings and things, with their manifold inter-relationships with each other.

The Indian Philosopher sees in the Triple Eye of Siva - 'Mukannan'; 'Kanulhalaan', the symbol typifying the Saiva conception of interweaving influences, where everything is connected with everything else, interlinking celestial, cosmic, human and sub-human forms. To live is to experience a reciprocal relationship that is dynamic.

"Saivam is linked to Sivam"

- Tirumantiram 1486

Man is conceived as a microcosm, a world of his own, comparable with the great macrocosm of the entire Universe. This correspondence of the microcosm and macrocosm is relayed in all the sacred Scriptures:

"Andam Pindam piripadaathu
Athuve Ithuvaam Ithuvc Athuvaam"
- Tirumantiram

"The macrocosm and the microcosm are indivisible
That is this and this is that".

They elucidate the principle that the part stands for the whole. Thus in the Universal life stream, everything is based on affinities and interlinks - 'I, Thou, It'. The All-Seeing Eye of Siva imparts the light for men to penetrate into the deepest layers of existence, not seen by the normal eye of man.

Throughout the ages, India has upheld a concept of pure knowledge, Jnanam, which though known to Platonism and Gnoticism has not been made familiar to the Western philosophers. They generally consider knowledge as something to be discovered, whereas to the Indian, knowledge is something to be recovered. Many factors have contributed to the unbroken continuity of Indian traditionalism. One particular preconception related to this concept of knowledge, concerning the past and its relation to the present is of special significance. It is that at its very origin, the Absolute Truth stands self revealed.

"Azhlithaan ulagenkum thaanaana Unmai"
"He bestowed (revealed) the Truth of His
Immanence to the world".

- Tirumantiram 167

We must take note of the right function of Indian Philosophy as only a step in the cultivation of a man's life. Philosophy assumes a special connotation in India. It derives its data from Revelation.

Truth is seen in diverse forms and lends itself to diverse points of view. Reason is neither creative nor intuitive. Its function is interpretation of facts, whereas infinite experience is embodied in Revealed Scriptures.

In his "Aspects of Indian Thought", Dr.Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath states that the

"mind as an organ of knowledge deals only with relative truths that are held to be the immediate ends of the different systems of Philosophy. Co-ordination of the system is possible because of a real unity at its basis. This unity of which Revelation is an expression is transcendental, and ancient Seers of India looked at this Unity from different angles and developed concepts of symbolic knowledge".

The different views of Reality which the different Schools of Philosophy enunciate are only fragments of one Supreme Truth, though this Truth which is simultaneously a way of life has been pushed into the shade. Yet the wonder is that it is still made available through ancient life-lines, that stretch back to the original revelation. It is our firm conviction that the dynamics of the Saiva pathway of light - Saiva Oli or Sivajnana Neri - can be restored to its pristine stature, when these original revelations from diverse Sources have been fully recovered and inter-linked with the Vedic and Agamic lore, (Sruti and Smriti) so as to project an integral vision of Siva. The luminous Eye perpetuates Self-Revelation.

Sivajnana Neri

Saiva Oli has undoubtedly had its impact on arts and sciences, and influenced cultural environments and the life style of the

Saivites who worship Siva. What is felt to be a long-felt need is to interpret correctly its ritual practices and normal values, its poetic forms and diction in the Source Books, as well as its symbol systems and philosophical perspectives in a way that affords clear insights into the dynamics of religious persistence and change in the history of man.

"The Triple Eyes dispel internal and external
darkness".

- Sambandar : Tiruvelukutirukai

It must be admitted that Sivajnana Neri - The luminous pathway of Siva - represents an amalgam of diverse strands of accumulated tradition that has lead to a unitive vision of Siva, the Transcendental and Immanent Being. It is imperative to comprehend the religious worship creed and the code of life of the Saivites in their prehistorical and mythological bearings, in order to understand fully the religious beliefs and outlook, and the ethical and social attitudes of the adherents of this particular faith.

The sources of valid knowledge (pramanas) are the direct perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana) based on analogy (upamana), and valid knowledge, ascertained through scriptural utterances and the testimony of great Preceptors. Perception provides knowledge of sensible objects; of things beyond the senses and, knowledge is had through inference based on analogy. Those things that are beyond perception and beyond the process of inference are ascertained through valid testimony.

Primordial matter is eternal. Forms may change but matter as such remains constant. Forms, which are a collection of parts, are viewed as a quality which inheres in matter, so that origin (creation) and dissolution, so far as the substances are concerned are brought

about by getting together and by separating the parts. Creation is only a descent from a manifestation of the eternal plane into the realm of space and time. In the absolute sense, in the divine plane, there can be no motion or flux. The principle of causality is a self-evident principle. It implies succession.

The crucial factor so often missed by modern western Philosophers and exponents of the Vedanta and other systems of Indian thought, as contrasted with Saiva Siddhantam is to ascertain the type of influence which imparts the initial motion to the atomic matter in the objective plane and to the inner faculties (mind, buddhi and eye) within. Saivites affirm that the operation of the Divine Will, being eternal is not determined by anything external to it; it is instrumental as the Efficient Cause of creation and dissolution.

"He came down from ethereal space, clothed in
form, karma to match.
By His refreshing Feet of Grace, He afforded
protection,
And Lo! he melted my heart from within and
revealed
That inner Eye of Peerless bliss and dispelled all
impurity".

- Tirumantiram 157

The Saivite views the world as a field of experience, of pain and pleasure resulting from the karmic forces of the past and wielding a moral value within and without. Pleasure and pain are facts of mental life and are occasioned by causes belonging to, and existing in the self. These causes are the nature of tendencies lying dormant in the self. By the operation of the veiling power of Siva (Tirod-

hanam), they are released and give rise to pain and pleasure on the stage of the world.

Indian systems of Philosophy are agreed in the main, that ignorance leads to the operation of karma, while knowledge enables the anma (soul) to realise its neutral state (sat-asat), and that all real agency belongs to the Lord. It is a fact of common experience that nothing comes out of nothing. Creation is differentiation, and dissolution is reintegration. Being comes from being, and not from non-being. The production of an effect implies a change of condition or movement, which takes into account an element that receives, and an active element which imparts the transitive movement. The first factor is the constituent or material cause of the product, while the second is looked upon as the instrumental cause. Such affirmation is termed the Satkaryavada in Saiva Siddhantam. The aim of all movement thus leads from experiencing pain and pleasure to dissociation from all impurities (malas) and the final attainment of liberation (veedu). It is the one event to which the whole creation moves.

Frosty Affronts and Incompatible Assertions

Insight, penetrating and profound, into the beauty of the Saiva Way of life is what is wanted today. Many lapses by the Researchers of alien cultures need our vigilant attention. Great was our amazement when such lapses were committed by some of our own research savants working in this field of magnetic spiritual forces. Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta, the author of the well known series, "A History of Indian Philosophy", dealing with the Southern School of Saiva Siddhantam in his fifth volume makes the following statements :

"The essence of Dravidian culture is therefore almost wholly taken from Sanskrit, at least so far as Philosophy is concerned".

He makes only cursory references to Meikanda Devar as the "Author of the Tamil Translation of the Sanskrit work, Sivajnanabotham (1235 A.D.)". Dr.Das Gupta admits that his ignorance of Dravidian languages had made him depend wholly on the Sanskrit literature and translations, and makes an excuse that "the study of old Tamil (?) is fairly difficult". This does not strike one as a justifiable reason for his incorrect and partial study of a system of such pre-eminent distinction as the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy.

Another author Dr.H.W.Schomercus, a German missionary, in his Book "Der Saiva Siddhanta", has failed to place Saiva Siddhantam in its correct perspective by some of his erroneous findings, which appear biased. Conformity to Truth is the very basis of Philosophy, as testified by St.Tirujnanasambandar.

"Futile it is to search for Him (by superficial means).

Do not test by argumentation or logical refutation.

Self-luminous is our effulgent one".

- Tirupāsuram - Tirumurai 111

The custodians of Oriental Philosophy and allied branches of learning in our leading Universities and the faithful sentinels of the erudite Saiva Monasteries (Adheenams) in their Research Centres should take up the necessary steps to validate the cardinal tenets of Saiva Siddhantam. There is indeed an urgency to be vigilant, and keep at bay frosty affronts and incompatible assertions, as meek acquiescence or indifferent neutrality to Truth can lead to dangerous

consequences. Vide Sakhyananda's 'Glimpses from our glorious past' - Pages 4-5¹

Our immediate task is to sharpen our insights into the field forces of the Saiva Pathway, so that some of Dr.Schomercus' erroneous conclusions are automatically invalidated, as darkness recede before light. Attention is focussed on one or two of his findings in the concluding chapter of his massive work on Saiva Siddhanta in German.

"The soul gives up individuality and every activity, and it is in a state of absolute passivity. This situation makes it impossible to understand the one-ness of the soul with God in the sense of an ethical community. The doctrine of the normlessness of the powers of the soul endangers the personality of the soul, the conception of existing for himself. This doctrine makes the soul as a reflection of something else".

"In spite of the religious fervour of the Siddhanta Scriptures, in spite of the religious aims of the experience of the one-ness with God, Saiva Siddhanta is not a religion that shows real life. It is a Philosophy of nature, that changes all religious categories into metaphysical situations".

"The doctrine of the normlessness of the powers of the soul will prevent Saiva Siddhantam from ever

1 Published by the International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilizations: Hony. Editor Dr. N.Mahalingam.

playing a role as a Religion and its metaphysical starting point will make its independent place in Philosophy very doubtful".

- (English Translation by Dr.Fries)

These are some of the concluding remarks by Dr.Schomerus in his book on Saiva Siddhanta, which naturally occupies a pre-eminent place in the libraries of the Western World, and which has served as a valuable source book of reference for Western scholars researching into the domain of this little known philosophic system, with an antiquity going back to the civilization of Mohenjadaró and Harappa and Sumeria of South West Asia, and a continuous tradition of over 3000 years in South India.

A Peep into Subliminal Awareness of ancient Path Finders

That the light of Saivam is tinged with the love of life and buoyant zest for living should be sufficiently stressed by our own research writers with driving force. Fundamental truths enunciated in the Saiva Agamas, Tirumurais and Meikanda Sastras should be elucidated clearly. The defined means for attaining the objectives enshrined in the sacred writings of the Saivite world as well as lived and experienced with subliminal awareness by the unending line of great Saiva Seers, Saints and Path-finders, should be validated and restated, not in axiomatic, crypt and elusive language, un-intelligible to the masses, but in clear cut simple language, illustrated by illuminating puranic legends and myths, parables and song-offerings.

The imperishable and ancient configurations that make up the multi-dimensional edifice of Siddhanta Saivam await interpretation

as pathways to victorious living. The philosophical concepts and formulac in the Saiva Texts are submerged in crypt, poetic symbolology, myths and rituals, while embodying compelling truths. The new insight demands life affirmations and simplification. Tirumular portrays the dynamic Jiva-Soul enjoying Siva Experience in the exuberance of the Love of Siva, in a simple yet beautiful imagery.

"Jivanukulle Sivamanam Poothathu"

**"In the garden of the Soul blossomed the fragrant
flower of Siva"**

"Sivam wafts the perfume of love - Anbe Sivam"

It is not feasible for any Philosopher or historian to comprehend Saiva Siddhantam, without in the first place being acquainted with the essence of Saiva truths contained in the records and testimony of the direct and personal experiences of the Saiva Seers and Nayanmars. The German Philosopher Dr.Schomercus avowed that Saiva Siddhantam was "not a religion that showed real life, but was a Philosophy of nature". The intuitive vision of Saivism sees through the world of constant permutations, where forces acting between things are inherent in them, and are not external. The objective world of nature is not separated from the observer. The universal patterns are comprehended by man's inner experience and world outlook, where animate and inanimate teem with life. Life is not separate from nature. It is everywhere and permeates everything like sunlight. That is the secret of the Luminous Eye of Siva.

In Tholkappiam, one of the key source books of Tamil literary tradition evolved by the Tamils, we find all natural phenomena are understood in terms of human existence. Knowledge is a participa-

tion between 'I, Thou and It' in a reciprocal relationship that is dynamic. The symbol of power (Sakti) and the thing symbolised are embedded in an intimate relationship with anma, the inner core of being; not "as a prisoner or a slave",- as Dr.Schomerus sees it - but where the symbol, is actually shared in the thing symbolised. This symbolism is effective and implies both action and knowledge. In the light of the irrefutable intimate relationship of the anma with the Supreme Being in an immanent world of Being, the words of Dr.Schomerus convey a sense of immaturity in understanding the fundamental truths of the Saiva Religion and Philosophy. In his concluding chapter of the book he says : "It is difficult to respect such beings or to have pity upon them". He refers thus to the followers of the Saiva Pathway!

In a background where there is no separation between observer and the phenomenon observed Reality cannot be uniform. There are degrees of Reality, depending on the intensity of the subjective impact. The hierarchical structure of the Cosmos was based on the rising degrees of Reality, depending on the greater or lesser value of the inter-connections. In this way, there is no limitation on the "absoluteness of God". The mystic insights of our Poets and Seers - Tholkappianar, Tiruvalluvar, Tirumular, Nayanmar, Sekillar and the Saiva Philosophers, partake in a transrational knowledge, which imbue them with a sense of transcendental authority.

Let us recount a simple fable. Once upon a time, an ant discovered a hill of Sugar. He ate one grain and carried home another grain of Sugar. It imagined at the next opportunity, it could carry home the entire Sugar hill. Those who have had a glimpse of a fragment of truth, fancy that they have comprehended it in entirety. Where is the hill and where is the ant's capacity? In dwelling at length on this aspect of developing intensely the intuitive Insight,

one becomes conscious of one's minuteness in the presence of Infinity!

A Glimpse into Source Works still in Circulation

The purpose of knowledge is to lead to action on things and beings based on interconnected affinities. Our main Source Books like Tholkaappiam, Tirukural and Thirumanthiram, still in circulation, testify man's willingness to reach an intuitive knowledge of the Essence of things. In this process, he gains an illumined insight to influence them from the inside.

It must be admitted that for the Saivites, the life of critical inquiry is invariably compatible with the life of faith. A man's faith is what his tradition means to him. It is also what the universe means to him, in the light of that tradition. The objective data of a tradition can be gleaned from the Sangam works and Source Books as cited by us, and are observable by a historian or a Philosopher. At the same time, it should be made clear that the assuring facts of personal faith add a heightened insight to man's accumulated religious tradition.

Tholkaappiam, Thirumanthiram, Tirukural and Tirumurais unfold not mere succession of records of man's penetration into diverse field-forces of existence, but a fascinating pageant of man's fulfilment of the sovereign purpose of human life. The study of a particular Text affords an outlet to examine a particular moment in the history of that particular people, as revealing their intertwined cultural strands.

The Dravidian Community developed a profound feeling of affinities for their environment (Puram-aham) with a network of dynamic correlations. Their belief in ceaseless transmutations

made them see into the impermanence of life. That strengthened their affinity to the Unchanging One, the ground of all existence.

That life amidst changing configurations should conform to the permanent values was the beginning of the search after eternal Truth.

"Valamtha arivin iyalpu vazhlvithale"

"To live and let live is the goal of enlightened
wisdom"

"Vinaiyin necki vilankiya arivin

Munaivan kandathu muthal noolahum"

"Freed from karmic actions and infused with
wisdom,

To him was revealed the Muthal-Primal Text".

- Tolkaappiam Marapiyal 91

The Imprints of Symbolic Configurations

It becomes increasingly clear that we cannot ignore the mythical, the symbolic and the emotive in man's quest for self expression, nor can his creative spirit be suppressed. If the Religious Philosophy of the Saivites is to be comprehended at all, it should be through a variety of forms and expression, utilising well known and popular myth, fable, allegory, parable, figures of speech and well established idioms. The recovery of Revealed Truth depends largely on our alert perceptivity to scan the 'interior vision' of our illustrious and enlightened Seers, who had opened new horizons to the Siva Jnana Neri - the gateway to the Wisdom of Siva.

"Sollaalum porulaalum alavaiyaalum

Thodaravonna arul neriye"

- St.Tayumanavar

"Not to be measured by words, context or logic
Ever extensive is the infinite pathway of Grace"

The Saivite fold should get together and concentrate on new approaches and pursue newer disciplinary and conceptual frameworks, for revalidating the age old truths postulated by Vedas, the Saivagamas, and the vast range of exposition on major fields of human activity embodied in the Tamil Sangam Corpus. Great is the need today to develop invaluable luminous insights to solve the problems facing humanity on the global front.

The "Settings of transience and wisdom", the fleeting and the permanent pursuits of Aram (Dharma), Porul (Wealth), Inbam (Bliss), and Veedu (Liberation) of the Saivites form an enchanting study. The consequent gain of new insights would be of the utmost value and relevance to our lives today. In and through the network of inter-related concepts and theories in the *Tamil Sangam Corpus*, and the Saiva Canonical Texts, can be deciphered the different aspects of the interlinked fabric of Reality that is Sivam.

"Sivanavan vaitha thor deiva neriyil
Pavanavan vaitha pazhlavazhli naadi
Sivanavanenpa thariya vallaar kal
Avanava nankulathaam kadanaame"
- Tirumantiram 1560

"Divinely ordained by Siva is the immortal pathway
Faithfully adhere to the ancient track laid by the
Luminous one.
To the valiant who can discern that He is Sivan
With him He abides in the eternal constancy of
Truth".

What is significant is that each Truth Seeker is so accustomed to having Reality filtered through his culturally inherited, linguistic conceptual structure that he is usually not aware of the existence of the filter. There is an order which every filter provides, as well as a plurality of ways of filtering the cultural mass of existence in its original state, thereby enabling a Seeker to experience Reality. Our modern Re-Searchers are unfortunately not fully aware of the imprints of Dravidian linguistic and conceptual formulations, nor have they an understanding of the religious, sociological and aesthetic concepts propounded so brilliantly by the Authors of the Classical and the Medieval Works in the heyday of the Chera, Chola and Pandian Kings in South India.

Relevant studies of the symbolic in its various aspects, particularly that of the myth, must be undertaken in order to make philosophical categories of thought more intelligible, especially to those who are outside the boundaries of the Tamil-Saiva Culture. The authentic religious experience underlying these myths needs to be restated. Since faith is the total pattern of a man's life, it demands much effort to come to an understanding, if not comprehension of another culture pattern. Therefore we should not relegate this field entirely to those who are unfamiliar with the diction and beliefs of the early Saivite Tamils, and their subsequent historic development, and their contribution to generate an integrated system of Indian thought, that is Sanatana Dharma.

Chapter 2

THE DYNAMICS OF THE TRIPLE EYE

In order that the supreme Siva may energize in the Anma, and in the universal substance from which the universe is evolved, there proceeds forth from Him an Energy (Sakti) which in its various manifestations constitute an essential doctrine of the Saiva religion.

The Supreme Sakti or essential Energy that subsists in and one with Siva, sends forth in successive developments:

The energy of desire - Iccha Sakthi

The energy of wisdom - Jnana Sakthi

The energy of action - Kriya Sakthi

These powers in operation constitute the Flawless Eye of Siva.

"The Flawless One approaches, manifesting Himself as inscrutable Grace, and thus joins Himself to the pure Maya. He then approaches the impure Maya, the causal one, and establishes bodies, organs, worlds and fruition in all their plenitude, in order that deeds eternal and inexorable may be consumed".

Thus souls are embodied and involved in the bond from which, when deeds are consumed, they will be evolved. This is the mystery of the immanent forms of the Supreme. The Supreme divinity Pati

manifests Himself and operates in the universe only through his Sakthi or Energy. Siva and Sakthi are as the sun and its radiance.

The Power of Visionary Sight

How can God (Pati) who is pure spirit be brought to mingle with and energize in souls amid impurities?

"He does so by sending forth an Energy that is like a ray of light, a mighty influence that quickens, enlivens and purifies all things. The energy is personified as a goddess, and this is the way, in which Saiva Philosophy bridges over the gulf between the finite and the infinite".

- Note.XIII - Dr. Pope's Introduction to Tiruvacagam.

Sakthi who becomes manifest as Siva's supreme Will and Power, Jnana and Love, works for the origination, preservation and dissolution of the worlds; she assumes both Rupa (form) and Arupa (formless) and Rupa-arupa (form-formless) and becomes God's Supreme Consort. She gives birth to all forms of life, and makes them eat their fruit in the respective worlds, and destroys their bodies in due time. Sakthi is the connecting link that relates God to the Souls and the Universe. It is the mysterious Divine Force that maintains the harmony of all that exist.

"I am Born by His Grace;
I grow by His Grace;
I die and get obscured by His Grace
I rest by His Grace

I drink the ambrosia of pure bliss by His Grace
My heart He did enter by His Grace".

- Tirumantiram 1800

Who shall know that Grace pervades
As illumined wisdom everywhere?"

- Tirumantiram 1978

St. Appar by his meek service showered his Love and served all with humility. In every act of his, he displayed his infinite measure of devotion to the Lord. His psalms wafted the pure fragrance of Love to Siva. St. Jnanasambandar was the Divine Child and in his filial relationship with Siva, he displayed profound compassion for all beings and bequeathed gracious love on all those who followed him. Hence Sekillar describes the meeting of the two Seers as the mingling of the sea of devotion with the sea of illumined Grace: Love in servitude is the armour of Appar, and participation in Grace is the token of the child Saint, Sambandar.

Siva alone can wield the power of Grace with Love fully and absolutely. Thus while there are three ultimate entities God, Anma and the unintelligent root of matter or Maya, substantially distinct from one another, Siva's Sakthi alone preserves their harmony in an Advaitic manner. The Saivite looks upon the human body as a wonderful framework designed by the Creator to be the temple of the Anma.

"The body is the temple and the mind its servitor"

- Tirumurai V

Pasa - Jnana is concerned with the knowledge of the world of matter and includes man's knowledge of the human organism too. Scientists have chartered this field of knowledge with its expanding

frontiers. Man sees with his eyes. The eye is like a camera. The light reflected by the objects falls into it through the lens; then an image forms on the retina and we see. Deep at the back of our eyes are millions of elements sensitive to light. At their extremity, the process of transformation of light variation into electric variation is taking place, extending in the form of electric charges. These charges propagate along a chain of nerve cells, with their neutron-nuclei and neurite antennae, and appear to be deposited in the brain cortex fields, and possibly the final picture or complete recording is performed by an electronic ray, very much like the technique in television.

The "Seeing process" is thus concerned with the transforming of material variations into electric patterns. It is a knowledge of the existing principles. We are dealing with a most subtle aspect of energy which is associated with electro-magnetic phenomena. These rays travel like waves, and wave lengths may vary according to which, the power of penetration increases. The scale of these wave lengths is infinite, and our powers of vision perceive only a small layer. There are a great many layers which we do not perceive ordinarily; that this is so will be unravelled in our study of the Dynamic Eye of Siva.

Further, we see images in our dreams. So we are able to see without our eyes. Are they merely reflection or authentic pictures never seen before? Considering all these transforming processes in our scheme of perception, we wonder whether what we think we see are 'real' or only appearances. No one can assure us. "Yaar Arivaar?"

From sensorial physics, we step into nuclear physics. Here we have found out on minute analysis that matter does not exist at all

in the way we imagined it to be: The minute particles of matter (molecule) appear to consist of basic elements (atoms) which revolve round each other at great speed. They are composed of nuclei with electrons revolving round them at great speed. This nuclear particle is not a concrete substance, but a centre of forces. So what we call matter seems to have been developed from energy, emanating from some thing that created the primeval atom, consisting of one positive, irradiating centre, the nucleus with an antipode revolving round it, which absorbing is called electron. It is like a miniature solar system that gives us the illusion of something concrete. This is the substratum of the primordial matter which Saiva Siddhanta calls Maya.

The energies necessary for this play of atoms are infinitely great. From where does this infinite store of energy spring? The clues to these questions can be the reward of a deep study of the Pathway of Saiva Sanmarga Neri, the enlightened way of Life in Siva-Sakthi. Science is a useful hand-maiden to Religion and Philosophy. When the atom is split, part of the binding energy is released, and when controlled can give an inexhaustible source of energy. All phenomena we see around us are the result of combinations of the series of basic elements; the gross matter is seen to change into radiant energy. It must be understood that it is radiation energy which sets up patterns of atomic structure, through which an external form is produced. The change in its aspect is in accordance with the inner rate of rotation. The atom structure can appear as water, and also in the form of ice or vapour.

In what way do these changes set in from radiation energy into atomic structure and evolving into vapours, liquids and solid matter? Saiva Seers view it as the working of the Power of Siva, and attribute to the Energy of Cit-Sakthi, the secret of a completely

identical structure propagating into different physical states, each with its own inherent laws. Iron in its solid state has its forces of pressure, attraction, resistance which are fixed according to physical principles. When it becomes liquid, all these laws cease to operate and a new principle, that of liquidity comes into action. In the gaseous state, different sets of laws come into action. When gas, under very high temperature passes into radiation-energy, the kinetic laws come into operation. The Divine Will of Siva is at work; Flawless is the Triple-Eyed One. Inscrutable is His Imminity, and awe-inspiring is His splendour.

On the level of nuclear physics, we have found that all is energy and kinetic activity, without being able to decipher the essence and source of this energy. Scientists offer interpretations after working with mental pictures of material, concrete molecules, atoms, protons and electrons etc. Now they postulate that these are all expressions of the working of energy, hence 'effects'. These kinetic effects appear to be vibrations, static vibrations as carrier waves over which other dynamic vibrations can pass through as travelling electric charges, with their accompanying magnetic fields. Viewed in this light, the human body, the temple of God is a fine, most subtle network of energies and fields with their centres of power, as alluded by St. Avvayar in her famous Sonata on Vinayaka Ahaval.

The Yoga-Neri-Pathway, well developed in Siddhanta Saivam, had discovered these centres of power and utilised them fully to attain full freedom from the involvement of the thirty six Tattvas or categories of existence. The Yoga-Sastras had a realization of the unchanging Reality of the Supreme Being and the changing nature of the empirical phenomena.

Let us revert to the analogy of the seeing-eye. Our eyes with which we see are a species of energy-concentration. In our perception, we confront the relative energy concentration of the eyes with the relative energy concentration of the object seen. This confrontation is transmitted in electric impulses and deposited in the brain cortex. Here it is interpreted as some image which is affirmed by the eye in the visual image of 'substance'. The eye sees not, unless made to see by the aid of the light outside and light within. This analogy explains the Anima's perception of the Lord and God's intimate relation with the Anima.

Ordinarily, our perception is not something all-pervading. We have perceptions of something, we 'look against' as in the film close-up taken one after another, in time, but we know very little of the Essence, the Real behind it. For the most part, living as we do in the world of objective phenomena, we are screened off from Reality and hence our restlessness, fears and relative values.

The Anima in the metaphysical language, inherently glued to impurity, experiences resistance to its movement towards the goal of freedom to break away from the narrow limits, and work towards a higher and wider insight. Hence the travail of a life geared to Siva-Realization! The Sadhana phase opens new horizons for the explorer of truth to tune his Will in consonance with the Will of Siva - Remember the Letters Five is the wise counsel of the knowers of Truth - "Enmanaar Pulavar".

The subject of Man's Experience

All levels of knowledge are comprehended and beyond it, the higher experiences of insight into Reality are effected by the Anima operating at all levels on the Will of the Supreme. The Lord is the SUBJECT of man's experiences. The Anima fails to perceive by its

own perception. The eye does not see unless made to see by the aid of the light outside and the light within.

The power of Siva, Cit Sakthi known also as Adi-Sakthi or the Consort of Siva, of the Form of Divine Will and made feminine because of its generating productivity, controls the processes of the transformation of matter into energy. It is the inherent Power, the creative Energy emanating from the Reality that is Sivam, that acts in all these extraordinary processes.

In the Macrocosm as well as in the Microcosm, the kinetic energy operates behind the structure of forms in not only creating them but also sustaining them. This energy of growth passes into that of dissolution and the phase of renewal, so beautifully brought out in the symbolism of the Dance of Siva, with His five-fold activity, one of which is His 'Anugraha' or Grace. The 'Panca-Krytia' of Siva is concerned with these five operations and without His Will, not a hair or atom moves. St. Appar in one of his moments of intense awareness and insight sings:

"Let His Divine Will prevail
Let my will be tuned to serve you
Thy Will is there to support me".

Saiva Seers constantly remind man to scrutinise his own embodied state internally and externally, so as to comprehend progressively, the mystery of the Divine Will. In the human body are present these phases of creative energy, growth and renewal; that of air in the lungs necessary for metabolism, liquids like the blood, bile, saliva, and solid matter like the bones to sustain the biological processes. Who is at the rock basis of all these processes? Saiva Siddhantam attributes these phases of activity to the Will of Siva, Luminous Siva Sakthi endearingly known as the Divine Mother.

The Saiva pathway deals logically with the Reality of God and the relationship of the Anima with the finite world of matter on one hand, and with the infinitude of grace, linked to infinite Siva, on the other.

The Siddhanta approach to Reality proves that this Supreme Being is in implicit union with His 'Ajnai-Aannai' or Divine Will, the gracious power of God and its effective operation in the macrocosm and microcosm. This inseparable union of God with the Anima, and the world is made possible by His gracious power, Cit-Śakti. Here is revealed one of the cardinal tenets of Saivism, that God as Absolute, Transcendent Being apart from the world is Pure Para-Sivam. But when regarded in relation with the World, He is Ardhanaariswara, with His Cit-Sakthi symbolised in the Third Eye of Siva.

The Saiva Scriptures apply the term Pasu-Jnanam to the knowledge of the self which is "Sittarivu", limited and conditioned knowledge and which does the basic 'interpretation'. But deeper penetration is made possible and the "Why and How" are communicated by the enlightened Saiva Truth-Seers who see into the life of things. In a well known Canto, St. Appar unravels the mystery of the supreme Mover, the triple-Eyed Siva, in relation to the phenomenal world.

"If you cause to whirl, who 'll not revolve?
If you cause to dissolve, who'll not submit?
If you goad to run, who'll not do so?
If you cause to melt, who'll not succumb?
If you cause to serve, who'll not respond?
If you cause to order, who'll not obey?
If you cause to see, who'll not perceive?

Who can See oh Triple-Eyed, if you do not
illumine"?
- Tirumurai VI 95.3

It remains a question who or what is the We. 'Who am I' is the keyhole. The Saivite makes every effort to find the key hole. Knowledge circles round the attainment of self-consciousness by the ego, by which it becomes aware of itself. St.Manicavasagar poses the query in his Thiruvacagam:

"Who am I? Wherein is my mid-point? What is
wisdom?

Who doth know me as existent and real"?
- The Humming Bee 10/2

The attainment of bliss is experienced in a surrender of egoity at the encounter with Siva. He wields the Master Key. The self must know the not-self to know it-self, and thus gain insight into the love of Sivam. This is divine illumination.

"Jnanam Isan Paal anbe"

"True Wisdom surges in Love of the Lord".
- St. Sambandar

The dynamism of the luminous power of Siva, His Grace, is so profound as to baffle the mind of man at its highest reach. That His gracious interplay, unfathomable by reason and analytic research can be known by revelation and intuitive perception is the affirmation of the Ancient Wisdom that is Sanatana Dharma.

Chapter 3

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE EYE OF SIVA

Let us now proceed to examine the concept of the Third Eye of Siva as a significant formulation of the Vedas and Agamas. The beautiful Cosmos and the human body consist of a network of energies and fields with their centres of power. As in the act of "seeing", so with all processes in nature and inside man, transformation processes are effected in a simple way; if only one can rid oneself of the veils of ignorance, can our interpretation of Reality by direct perception be free from the clouds of unknowing.

Manifestation takes place when the force of the carrier-field, which is at the same time a kind of brake field, gets affected by an active field. Here rests the secret of the static-dynamic Flawless Third Eye of Siva. It is the mystery of the essential Reality, the absolute Truth of Siva and that of His creative Energy - the invisible living activity of Sakthi.

Assuredly the most vivid reality is the human being. Gazing at the Eye of Siva, man sheds his impurities or 'malas'. The practice of such synthesized thinking, so as to draw the essence from the things seen will lead one to view the fundamental principles and their inter-dependent connections.

We have seen that all perceptions are processed transformations. What we thus perceive conjures to be energy and kinetic activity.

Whether what we perceive is actual reality depends on the perceiver. Who am I who perceives the phenomenon, and what is the I-myself? The limited and conditioned seeing power of man from his relative plane of perception strives to behold the all-pervading, all-seeing Eye of Siva. Inscrutable, inconceivable is the radiant energy behind the mask of the Eye of Siva. All phenomena in its entirety are constituted by the combinations and rates of rotation of its radiation energy. When we arrange the "Uyir"(vowel) and "Mei(consonant) letters of the Tamil alphabet, in ever changing combinations, similar to the combinations of the elements, we emit patterns of thought structure and express something vital.

The process of thought based on relative conditions registers facts based on mutual comparisons, contrasts and contraries. Intellectual thought comprises receiving, impressing and recording of events. Then there is remembering, comparing and combining. Finally there is the drawing conclusions, calculating and interpreting of the registered data with relative standards of value.

How difficult it is to break through stereotyped trains of thought of daily life, unless one remains quite alert. To gaze at the Eye of Siva is to break through our obsessions and work for a more expansive and higher insight. Trends of thought which give rise to cults - isms and dogmatic assertions on love, Dharma, war and peace, passed on by others lack Reality. Such divorce between theory and practice can be overcome if man succeeds in getting beyond intellectual, rational thought.

The Process of Transforming Thought

In a spontaneous relationship with the creative energy beaming from the Eye of Siva, the partition between thought and Reality can be made transparent.

Watch this process of transforming thought which bears the seal of that to which the Nayanmars immortalised in Periya Puranam of Sekillar were fundamentally avowed, the gift which made them free, unique and irreplaceable human beings, Siva-like in stature. When we progress from the stage of hum-drum every day living to a reality opening to the transcendent immanent Eye of Siva, we become essential beings as opposed to existential self; likewise the eternal anma is opposed to the ego of individuality. The Saivite has a discerning awareness by which he perceives transcendent reality and without which, no such perception would be possible.

Behold the Eye of Siva! The Triple Eye whose radiant energy transforms ordinary processes like

Reason into <u>Intuition</u> ;	Life into <u>existence</u> ;
Memory into <u>recollection</u> ;	Knowledge into <u>wisdom</u> ;
Work into <u>worship</u> ;	Alienation into <u>integration</u> ;
Leisure into <u>peace</u> ;	Subjectivity into <u>interiority</u> ;
Coexistence into	Sentiment into
<u>Communion</u>	<u>inspiration</u>
Teaching into <u>initiation</u> ;	Joy into <u>anandam (bliss)</u>
Detachment into <u>liberation</u> ;	Delusion into <u>certainty</u> ;
Love into <u>illumination</u> ;	Word into <u>Experience</u>

The Eye of Siva has awakened man from the stupor of ignorance. We have recognised our ignorance. We know that we know nothing. The symbolic Eye stands for the highest form of consciousness, the essential integrating centre of infinite power. Look intently. The vertical, half closed eyelids point the path inwards. How do we set about to cross the threshold and proceed towards that which lies beyond thought? Wherein lies the Will that engages one's energy with intense, burning interest to contact the spark of the energy

centre within? There is a transformation of values. It is to be in living contact with the built-up sublime experiences of the sages and saints; the intimate impact effected by reading the scriptures, and their vibrant expressions in the realms of art, music, poetry and sculpture help one to attain a higher attunement, where all discords and impurities fade out. The soul of man cries out: "MUKKANNA! Illumined by Thy Eye of Grace alone, can I see ought!"

"Who will see if Thou doth not grant the light rays?"

"Oh luminous Eye, Thou willeth and we SEE".

"If Thou open Thy Eye, who will not see?"

"Oh Seeing Eye, withhold not Thy Sight".

- Tirumurais I-VII

The Saiva Nayanmar, Saint Appar realises in Thirupuhalur cantos that impurity causes confusion and unrest. In man there arises an ever growing submission, on account of his many failures. In radiant reverence of the omnipotent Sivam, man sees through things, gaining a deeper insight from His Flawless Eye.

"The innate dispositions loosen their grip on me,
Whence the light of the inner Being manifests in
grandeur"

The creative Energy of Paraparam touches the nucleus of Being of our Hindu Sages, and the intrinsic constellation of the Triple-Eyed One enables the 'Seers' to experience the profound significance of life, leading them to the centre of their inner being, filled with the light of wisdom, seeing unity in the various processes, and fusing into the intense awareness of the Real. They describe their experiences in mantras and tantric formulae of intrinsic power and beauty.

Chapter 4

THE EFFICACY OF GAYATRI

All great religions of the world are of one assent, so far as belief in the existence of God, potential divinity of the Soul and liberation through transcendental experience of God are concerned. All great Religions derive their validity from the realisations of one or more Seers of outstanding eminence. All of them owe allegiance to certain Scriptures, while urging man to attain freedom through the knowledge of God. All of them prescribe certain Forms, Names and Symbols as aids to spiritual growth. The language of the soul is one, but the languages of the nations are many. The difference between religions is one of expression and not of substance. Their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, intrinsic. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also as it is on many and diverse instruments. Thus spoke Swami Vivekananda whose life and work testified the truth of the Luminous Eye, enlightening and illumining the hearts of every one of the seekers of Truth.

By the rays of Sun, we see the light. So too, the vivifier, the Savita Dev of the Universe directs our intellects, and thereby we know ourselves and the universe. We realise the Power in ourselves, as we see it manifest in the animate and inanimate objects of the Universe. Thus God is the director of our intellects. The manifestation outside ourselves in the phenomenal world and the essence within us are but the projections of His Power. God abides

in us and pervades the universe, and so let us link our thoughts to Him. Such is the efficacy of the Gayatri Mantra.

In the Gayatri Mantra, man maintains his link with the boundless Power that manifests the worlds. It expresses the hidden meaning of the Vedas and hence came to be known as 'Veda Mata' - the Mother of the Vedas. Gayatri develops the intellect and thereby the knowledge of the material objects leading to the knowledge of the Brahman. Gayatri brings the jiva in unison with God and that is the object of man's existence. Therefore the Hindu 'varnas' get this Gayatri Initiation. Even today, it is followed as an important ritual called 'Upa-nayana', or 'Brahmopadesa'. By means of initiation, the understanding of the mysteries of Gayatri and its regular practice will open the divine 'eye' in man. This additional eye (nayana) is called in Sanskrit "Upa nayana". The initiation of the young Hindu was meant to open the 'third eye' in the middle of the forehead. It came to signify the opening of the new world of man and devas to the novice, and marks the beginning of his studies of the Knowledge of Brahman - Brahma Vidya.

The Sacred Mantra of Gayatri is distinguished by the two forms. One is the three-layered formula used for Japa or incantation and the other is the seven-layered mantra used in Yagjnas and temple rituals. The Gayatri Mantra in common use is as follows:

"Om Bhu Bhuvah Suvah
Om Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi
Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat".

We meditate on the Adorable and ever Pure Effulgence of the Resplendent Vivifier of the Universe - that Absolute Sun of Splendour (consciousness) who impels our mental faculties.

The glory of the Gayatri Japa is immeasurable and regular sadhana leads to liberation from bondage. Rg.Veda X.121.1 declares:

"O Man, let us with devotion worship that great God, who is the support of the sun of all such luminous bodies, who as unprecedented Lord of all that was and is or shall be, existed before the creation of the Universe and who has created the worlds from the earth to the Sun".

Manu Smrti Says:

"He who practises the Japa of Gayatri regularly for three years assumes the form of air after death and becoming all-pervasive like ether attains the Supreme Brahma".11.82

Taittiriya Aranyaka states:

"The learned Brahmin who worships the Sun at the time of the rising and setting attains all forms of auspiciousness" P.2.A.2.

Yaginavalkya reiterates:

"First Utter Om, then the three Vyaahrtis - Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah. Then utter the formula of Gayatri. The Preceptor tells his disciple: "My son, Bhuh is your head; Bhuvah is your eye; Suvah is your voice".

Bhuh is the prana. Your brain, intellect and knowledge are all in the realm of your head. They should be ready to serve all those who

breathe. Also the Prana that you breathe comes from other living creatures. Therefore you are the giver and the receiver of the Prana.

Bhuva means the destroyer of pain. Therefore your eyes must not be indifferent to the pain of others. This is your worship. This is your life. This is the way to realise the Absolute.

Suvah means the giver of happiness. Therefore your voice should impart happiness to others. Everyone should find truth and hope in your words.

The Three Vyaahrities are three invocations. They invoke the three layers of our Universe. Existence has graded differences. The real difference lies in consciousness. This level in the grade of consciousness is known as a Vyaahriti of Gayatri. The Bhuhloka refers to the physical plane of matter (solid) and denotes a state of being. Bhuva refers to the vital plane with "Prana" or life-principle and Suvah implies a higher level of being and living, the mental plane. These levels of creation are the steps to the temple of God.

Ultimate Reality though beyond empirical knowledge is attainable through intuitive perception. Integration of will is one method of cultivating intuition which can be achieved by concentrated Gayatri incantation. Intuitive insight is brought about by unified will. Incessant Japa of Gayatri mantra is beneficial. It is the answer to the problems of life.

The Rishis and Sages in their Gurukulam trained the young aspirants to cultivate the attributes of the earth by performing actions without attachment and gain the perception of Bhuh which is self subsistent. Bhuvah is all-knowing and unalloyed devotion. The perception of Suvah comes from cultivating the attributes of the sun, which is all bliss. Bhuh is action, earth, and represents

manifestation. Bhuvah is devotion, firmament and a state of existence. Suvah is knowledge, heaven and indicates a state of annihilation. Thus these terms signify a variety of applications and their influence on the mind of the devotees is equally varying. Gayatri is a prayer to save us from the binding quality of action through knowledge. Knowledge comes through devotion which is essential for the realisation of God.

Gayatri contains the mystic formula about the universe, the Solar System viewed as a living thing. It says, you are the living time or the life-span of the universe, you are the divine path, the universal power within the body of man. All creation sprang forth from the same Divine Power 'Gayatri'. Man and the universe are built on a similar pattern. The first thing that God bestows on man is Splendour - Bhargo, so that one can behold Him face to face. The Sun has received only a fraction of that Effulgence. All unworthy pursuits and sentiments of man are kept under control, regulated and transformed by the Bhargo of the Gayatri - the ever pure Effulgence. Bhargo means the light that leads to progress and annihilates fear and evil. Bhargo has thirty three divine forces of God that hold on the universe and are also posited in man. They are as stated in the Vedas; Eight Vasus or abodes of the whole creation - Earth, water, fire, air, ether, moon, sun and purusha. Eleven Rudras are the ten vital airs called Prana, apana, vyana, samana, udana, naga, kurma, krikala, devadatta, dananjaya and soul. Aditiyas are twelve. There are twelve months of the year. Indira connotes the source of great power, while Prajapathi stands for the lordship of Creation. The Grace of God which helps us to be virtuous is known as Bhargah.

Light is connected with consciousness. Man wakes up from slumber. In the outer world too, light causes all sleeping creatures

to wake up. It does the same work as Mind does inside each one of us. Both bring about awakening. When the Seers awaken the Soul into the consciousness of Siva, they also see the light of Siva. Thus light and Siva are inseparable. Gayatri is an invocation to the Sun God, Savita, who is the Resplendent One (devasya) glowing with supernal light (Bhargo). Thus the inner Sun of our Consciousness is the Universal One, who dwells in us. The Solar globe of the physical Sun is the body of the Solar Logos. Therefore the 'Devasya, within the Sun is the Consciousness pulsating interior to the Sun. What Gayatri signifies is not the visible or the physical Sun, the giver of light and heat, but the Pure Consciousness symbolised by the inner Sun - the inner light (Savitr or deliverer). His power is called the awakener. When the Sun's rays are about to emerge in the East, these mental rays of Aditya (Gayatri), Savita (Savitri), Sūrya (Saraswathi) Khaga (Usha), work on the Mind of man and awaken him (from inside) from sleep-state into full wakefulness.

The prayer of Gayatri should be offered at the 'Sandhya' time, the time indicating the junction of the night with day, just after sunset and before sunrise. This is the hour of prayer fit for Brahma, "Brahma-Muhurta". At this time, the sky emits a blue light or halo and contains a subtle force of magnetism which effects the brain and soothes the nerves. Also the morning air is charged with vital energy of 'prana'. This prana force is absorbed into the body and regulates its movement by the Will, known as Pranayama (control of prana) and the psychic centres or Chakras get fully charged during the sandhya prayer of Gayatri.

It is now evident that man is not capable of Self-Awakening. These rays of Savitr, invisible to our eyes, but visible to our mind brings about in us the awakening state. Therefore meditate on this

Resplendent Splendour, the Lord inside the Sun-globe. That is the gist of Gayatri. Brahman is BE-ness - the state of Sat which is the State of Truth, and which connotes Reality or conscious existence. It also implies the experience of that existence as a living reality.

The three feet of Gayatri are as follows: "Tat Savitur Varenyam" - Resign yourself to the Will of God. His Grace is showered on one who surrenders to the Will of God. Bhargo devasya dhimahi: Establish God in your heart. Hold in the heart, the effulgence of Blissful Siva. Dhiya yo na Prachodayaat: Let your intellect be guided by Him. The seers of Truth counsel us to fix our attention on the eye-brow and recite Gayatri. The space between the crown of the head and the Adam's Apple is twenty four fingers. Gayatri has twenty four syllables. The human body has twenty four segments - seven cervical, twelve thoracic, and five lumbar in the principal nerve, Sushumna. There are also five senses of perception, five organs of action, five vital airs, five subtle elements and four antakaranas. Thus Gayatri has a relation with the body and the universe of twenty four tattvas, elemental and mental.

Divine knowledge is subtle such as mantra, japa etc., but the universe is gross. It is only by experience that we can arrive at the truth, and experience can be had through thoughtful action. The heart cleansed with Gayatri japam upholds righteousness and splendour. Harmony in words and deeds, knowledge and action, speech and mind characterise the votary who chants Gayatri regularly. Gayatri is divine Grace at work everywhere. It promotes all the four traditional aims of life - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.

Sage Viswamitra prays for the activation of one's intelligence by the rays of that light which flows from the Sun, which is the

illuminated energy of the Creative Consciousness that is massed therein. Maharishi Debendra Nath Tagore writes in his autobiography (1909) (page 35-36):

"I meditated on Gayatri mantra, It permeated my whole being, and inspired my thoughts and volitions. God was my indwelling Spirit, and he opened my inner eye of wisdom. I walked under His guidance and I SEE HIM face to face and hear His Voice and became His companion, seated in my heart - My Guru enshrined in my heart".

The aim of Gayatri for Sri Aurobindo was to transform the human nature into the divine. "Let us meditate on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the Truth". Gayatri brings about the release of the power, the life force impregnated in the Prana which is the manifesting power of the Universe. Where-ever there is life, the storehouse of infinite energy is behind it. Will Power is an immensely far reaching force like electricity. Whenever man integrates His Will Power, he can do mighty work. Gayatri japa brings about purity of heart and the Sadhaka acquires radiance from God. It is the bestower of all boons. The weak are made strong, the agitated recover peace and calm, and the mystery of Grace is unravelled through the sacred formula.

Gayatri is a most excellent incantation to the "Param-Param Jothi Parame" - "Thou of brilliant radiance". It is as a single luminous Power (Viraj) that the conjoint Principles generate the Sun, and then depart from each other, this division of essence from nature, night from day, being the inevitable condition of all manifestation. It is invariably the coming of the light that separates the Parents that are united in Eternity. Agni is a symbol of the Brahat

- Father (heaven). The conjoint principles are intention and power. There is no distinction of potentiality from act.

The creative power on any level of reference, whether for example as God or Man, is always a unity of conjoint principles - that is, a mithunatva. The soul is awakened to the one essence in another nature. It is the conjoint principle of one active and the other passive, in terms of time and space - active and passive principles, determined by the necessity of "thought, word and deed", whereas 'in divinis', action is immediate and there is no real distinction of agency from means. Savitur and Savitri are both equally wombs (yoni). One is the Karta that acts and the other fosters, and either refers to the co-operation of the conjoint principles - intention and power.

The Gayatri Hymn "Dhiyo yona prachodayaat" is meditation on the One Effulgent Source of Energy, Consciousness Pure, to flow from the macro-cosmic level to the micro-cosmic centre of the human being and illumine man's consciousness that is the Being evolving to Becoming. The key to rise from chaos to harmony is to intensify devotion to the Effulgent Splendour who has merged as One with Sakti in indissoluble union and partake of the radiance of power, emanating from the Resplendent third Eye - the Source of all luminosity.

"He whose Light turns the understanding towards the "Atman", tranquil and taintless, that has consumed the fuel (God destroys the ignorance of spiritual aspirants as fire burns up the fuel) of those seeking liberation, I go for Refuge to that Effulgent One whose light turns the understanding towards the Atman". 20. Svetas-vataropanisad.

Gayatri can be interpreted as a state of luminous cognition (Samvit) and perfect beatitude (Paramanandam), being possessed by what is one's very own. Such is the intense felicity brought about by the procreative coupling, identical with that of Intellect and Word (Manas and Vac). Gayatri activates the intellect which is the means of procreation, the mother of Agni and Savitri is identified with the meters (chandas) which are the means of reintegration and in her conjunction with savitr, presents the birth place (matrix) of established order. Therefore at the Sandhya hour of dawn and sunset, with the interplay of light and darkness, the Gayatri incantation carries immense Splendour, with the spreading rays of the fontal light, which forms the texture of the worlds. Just as the kindling of Agni makes visible a hidden light, so the utterance of the chants makes perceptible a silent principle of sound.

The spoken word, the Mantra is a revelation of the Silence, that measures the trace of what is in itself immeasurable.

Ananda Cumaraswami sums up the quintessence of Gayatri in his Essay on 'Manas' in Selected Papers - "Metaphysics."

"Manas is the Pure Intellect, at once a Name of God and that in us by which He may be grasped". Thus states Rg Veda 1.139.2. "We have beheld the golden One by these our eyes of contemplation and of intellect." Brhadaranyaka Up: 1.5.7, "The Father is Intellect (manas) The Mother, Word (Vac); the Child, Spirit or life (Prana)", according to which, Intellect and Word, Heaven and Earth as Knower and Known, are the universal parents of the conceptual universe". Maitri Upanisad VI.34, "Intellect is for men a means of bondage or liberation - of bondage if it clings to objects of perception and of liberation if intellect has been brought to a thorough stillness in its own source. The Last end has been attained when

there is no longer a distinction of knower from known, or of knowledge and Being, but only of knowledge as Being, and Being as knowledge. Here Thought and Being are consubstantial. Thinker and Thought 'in divinis', being one essence is characterised by sameness, perfect simplicity and peace". This in essence seems to us to be the ultimate secret of initiation into Gayatri Mantra. Thus Gayatri commits one to that immortality far beyond the Sun, the awakening of the mid-point eye in us to coalesce with the Splendour of the Triple Eye emanating Paramanandam - Bliss ineffable.

It is indeed difficult to explain or interpret myths and symbols to bring out the sublime spiritual meanings. The divorce of intellect from will is the root cause of our relative infirmity to participate in the realisation of our Realised Truth-Seers. Meditation on Gayatri unfolds the Grace necessary for the Realisation of the Beatitude of Bliss flowing from the Luminous EYE.

Let us meditate on the Unconquerable Sun - "Resplendent and wonderful Thou Art" - "Bhargo devasya dhimahi" - Hold in the heart, the Effulgence of God". The Power that is the source of the Sun is also the source of all that exists in the system, and so it must be the source in which we are individually rooted. The light of that spiritual Sun is therefore to be discerned within ourselves. Let us clear the obscuring shadows that cloud our souls and permit its radiance to shine in us. That Luminous Eye never winks. Its light is always shining. "Dhiyo yona prachodayaat".

Chapter 5

THE ILLUMINED UPANISAD SEERS

The Symphony of the luminous Self

The Ancient 'Knowers' of the Vedic age have testified that Reality or "the thing-in-itself" is unknowable for the most part, except for rare glimpses of it. Therefore man should avoid limiting Reality or distorting It by his "categories" and labels and dogmas, and typically "human" approaches like the desire for physical or mental security for survival of individual identities.

The Universe was viewed by these Seers of Wisdom as a most subtle aspect of expression of creative Energy and a vast field of interaction of pure Consciousness and Energy (Siva and Sakti) in their many permutations, combinations, operating according to their respective scale of vibrations. Even in our planet earth, which is all that we know about, there may be forms of life and primary forces both visible and invisible, we are not fully aware of. However, direct perception, directly experienced beyond the senses, beyond mind, and feeling have been communicated with an irrefutable certainty in crystal clear yet crypt expression by these exalted Seers. They perceived that everything has come forth from Light, through a Word, as an expression of Will invested with power.

In the Taittiriya Upanisad is communicated the discovery of certain fundamental existing principles, and a mode of application of existing processes. The Sages, having taken into consideration all the transforming processes in the universe and in our scheme of perception speak with their powers of vision tuned to the luminous Will of Para Brahman. In their "seed expressions" are reflected the incompre-hensible living light manifested as wisdom, radiant love and 'Being' with primeval simplicity. They have revealed the cosmic laws by which the universe operates and also the techniques of realisation and experience in one's own being. Consciousness is the axis of cosmogenesis. These Seers give us the assurance that every human being is capable of perception and experience of truth in infinite ways.

The energy of man is sustained by the energy of the universe, pursuing its mysterious powers towards higher and higher unity of consciousness. Human action, "willing and feeling" has to the seen in the perspective of the universe, its existence (sat) and its consciousness (chit) or intelligence. The Upanisad Seers registered that each unit of "being" can become synthesised and have the Will to do so, to propel a kind of internal gravitation. There is cosmic synthesis. The vital forces of the earth must be kept dynamic under the sway of the Self-Luminous One and not under the paralysing effect of death. Man cannot synthesise through coercion or enslavement, but through agreement and harmonisation of knowledge.

How can man rise to higher and higher levels of synthesis except by atomic affinity? Empathy (sympathy) is to gravitate around the "monopathy" - one centre of light - Pathi (Lord). All unifying action enhances human values. There is a great need to sharpen our insights as we see a world around us that is balanced upon instability and consequently breaking up. In dissolution, all things are reduced

to elementary yet stable forms, and through that emerges the cosmic vortex in which the primordial matter involves upon itself in centred forms of associations. The very essence of creation is to experience the creative essence in its infinite mode.

The Seers of Truth with illumined awareness have affirmed in what came to be known as the "Santi Patha", the creation of a poised state of mind and spontaneity and the establishment of a dynamic witnessing Centre, which though not affected by the instable world in constant motion, will experience universal peace and tranquility. There is nothing external to the cosmic life-energy. The consciousness or light or life is existence itself - Sat. All forms of manifestation reflect their movements in the Creator, Brahma, and experience their own movements of bodies, thoughts and feelings, being counterparts of space, time and consciousness. Thus macrocosmic and microcosmic life energies move in harmonic rhythm with existence, through a process of aligned resonance in "Being" and expansive "Becoming" in the realm of space and time.

Siva as Terjas (tejomayam) is the Supreme Overlord. Agni is fire but 'Tejas' is the essential quality of fire - the intensity of the flame-fiery energy. It is as the breath - Prana - that Agni shines. "I am the splendour of the splendid - the flash in what is luminous". Agni, the heat within and Aditya, the light without determine the awareness of all forms. They unite at the level of each form in the intervening space which determine the medium (fluid light, ever present in the intervening space) in which the forms crystallise during every breath, due to electro-magnetic interactions. Thus Agni and Light interact in the space between the forms, and dissolve all forms to be created anew in each breath cycle by electro-magnetic interaction." - Taittiriya Upanishad.

The elements of the active life are measures of fire. They, being mortal in themselves, return to the immortal fiery Breath of the Total Presence (atman, spirit, Piran) within us. By correct practice of Pranayama (respiration) can one experience consciously the variation in the measures being kindled and dying out in one's own body. The Vedas affirm that only a quarter of His Tejas suffices to fill up the Cosmos of time and space, however far they may extend, and however long they may endure, and that the source remains unaffected by whatever is produced from It or returned to It, at the beginning or at the end of an aeon.

"The Solar Agni, the spiritual Sun supports the 'being' of all things, but by which the Solar gateway is concealed. He who would enter in, praying that the rays may be dispersed sees the Face or point of the Agni in the Solar Orb - Isavasyam Upanisad, 15. All deities are forms of Agni. When Agni is enkindled, it transmutes into many forms. It is the breath of 'Vak' and the essence of all gods (Atma). Agni is the counter form of every form. 'Hiranyagarbha' is Agni, the giver of spirit. Agni is the 'tejas' of sacrifice. Agni is called upon to give the Gods their share (bhagam) in his function as priest. The Gods are participants (bhaktas) in the divine essence of spiration. Bhaga or Bhagawan is a 'general designation of the active power in any of his aspects as the free giver or sharer out, who makes his Bhaktas to participate in his riches, the aspects of his Essence. Bhagawan dispenses himself of his substance. So Bhakti is the act of distribution or the act of partaking of what is given. It is the share (Bhakti) that is given to the deities by the sacrificer, by Agni as the sacrificial Priest.

Bhakti thus is the illumination of devotion, because all giving pre-supposes love. Bhakti implies dedication and devotion in participation. Thus the Vedic Seers exclaim; "In Him are all beings

and the Luminous Eye that oversees". Just as the light within is called the Chandra Jyoti the reflection of the light of the sun within in our mental space too, there is a star, a Nakshathirani called the Prana Chakshu or the Third Eye which alone is responsible for establishing cosmic attraction to all forms. Unless the seeker becomes aware of this third eye, the mind cannot attain to cosmic harmony. Also, this star has a cosmic rhythm with one of the stars in the cosmos. In astrology this star is called the star of ascendancy or Lagna.

In the inner life impulse within each thought form the directional pull attracts all forms towards the centre from "without". This magnetism is felt as a polarised movement in the realm of thought, due to the effect of the life energy in space. What is attractive once becomes repulsive after a time period. Let us remember that the creative forms of the universe are repositories of consciousness, as well as containing the matrix, the existential essence, and endowed with the power of existence, by which the reality of the forms is experienced. The essence of reality is the conscious centre felt within the self-consciousness of the forms. This jiva or the self-conscious entity is in the space within the ambit of feeling. It is the Hrydaya or heart-akasha, the space where likes and dislikes manifest.

The centre of thought origin is in the mid-tongue, the svarloka and reside in this region as light radiations and become reflected in visible forms as Agni (heat) and as life energy or Vayu in oscillation of Prana and apana; as external light or Aditya in the visible forms, and as space in the universe. Internal thought radiations of Light undergo these reflections in the external space outside and ends up as darkness or space. These radiations of thought that move out into space animate what they illuminate and give rise to the objective

phenomena on the cosmic space-screen, talking, seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing about these from outside. There is an awareness of thinker, his thought and the object of his thought in identity. It is the form of Truth, spontaneous in Prana and blissful in thought.

In the tenth Anuvak of Shiksha Valli is enunciated the existence in Realisation of the Essence of "I", the self in the cosmic grandeur. The 'I' is the centre, and the circumference is the cosmic space with all its forms. It is the witnessing point of consciousness for the entire world of names and forms. This 'I' is supported by the immortal food from above, suffused by the fluid-light, and full of life and intelligence. The Centre 'I' is aware of the continuous flow of life, from outside towards itself, in a stream of translucent light. Here is the subtle manifestation of the Luminous ParaSiva's Self Effulgence.

Light, all-pervading and inexhaustible fills the universe substantially in one's Awareness. The texture of fluid light issues from a perennial Source which is centred at one's own 'I' centre. The Sage Trisanku experienced the grandeur of Om as the cosmic felicity, illumined by the Self Luminous ParaBrahman. (Taittireya Upanisad).

In the resplendence of the Self-luminous ParaBrahman illuminating the 'I', and revealing its harmonic union and majestic splendour with the Immensity of Cosmos, the pattern of living and experiencing poses no challenge. Adherence to Truth and realisation of the essence of forms in all planes of perceptions, in harmony with all cosmic forms and movements, acting in consonance with cosmic laws and principles of life, exemplifies the consummation of Knowledge and Worship, according to the Upanisad Seers.

Truly it is only the Luminous Eye of Parama Sivam that can awaken the dormant insight of the half asleep 'I' on the relative plane of existence, and then only can Man become the super-man of the New Age. Aum.

Chapter 6

RADIANT INTERNAL LANDSCAPES

In the study of the Saiva Scriptures, it is true that most of the people today are encumbered with the thoughts on the subject passed on by others. Commentators on the Tirumurais and Meikanda Sastras get more attention than their Authors, so that intellectual rational thought gets precedence over spontaneous intuitive revelations of our Seers and Nayanmar.

This was one of the reasons why we planned to lay aside the scholarly commentaries and look into the springs of Tholkappiam, Tirukural, Tirumantiram, and the Sacred Vedagamas and Puranas, sparkling with life to gain new insights into the "mysterium tremendum" of Paraparam-Parasiva. In order to break away from the fixed ideas and stereotyped thoughts on Pathi (Lord), Pasu (Soul) and Pasam, (grip of matter), we propose to delve into the springs of some of the Tamil Classics and work towards a higher insight to awaken the dormant third Eye to perceive what is Real knowledge. Truly one comes to realise that an inward, luminescent consciousness is necessary to get away from thought-habits and move into the realm of psychic reality in its fundamental simplicity.

Crucial Links

The total value of natural law has to become a living reality and no aspect of natural law must be violated; then the Awareness of

the Infinite Sivam will be a continuum. This is the precious legacy of our Realised Seers. In the Vedas occur a formula,

"Aharaha Sandhyam upasita
Vedo nityam adhiyatam"

- Prajapati Smriti

Man must concentrate on the crucial link, the connecting point which is the Bindu Point. In the ultimate sense, it is the mid-point of connection between the unmanifest and the manifesting world composed of thirty six Tattvas or constituents of existence. It is the point of light where the value of consciousness - chit - becomes transformed into matter and energy, where the static starts to be kinetic, the unchanging becomes transformed to change. Therefore morning and evening, open your awareness from the manifest to the unmanifest, from activity to silence and vice-versa.

In the Vedic Text quoted above, the letter A is the total expression of pure knowledge. When A is intoned, the mouth opens fully and the sound is a continuous one. Thus the Sacred Scriptures, in fact the field of pure knowledge is structured in the Sound A, the first sound of the alphabets of all languages. "Adhiyatam" also would imply the sense of the intellect - Dhi. The discerning faculty of Buddhi or intellect must become aware of the pure knowledge emanating from a sound. Man's awareness must be opened out to a level, the conjunction point, which is both static and dynamic, the point from where life springs and creation commences. The necessity of this daily practice in chanting the Mantras prescribed in the Vedagamas is to experience the awareness of the Real, a solution to all the disturbing elements which create imbalance in life.

The Saiva Rosary

The Holy Name of Siva resounds in the Sri Rudram of the Yajur Veda, considered to be the most significant of the four Vedas. In this Veda, the supreme majesty of the Lord is developed and he is expressly called Siva by Name - Sivo Namase (Yaj. S.3.63). The Panchakshara is said to be placed in the centre of the three Vedas -

"Namah Sāmbhave cha mayobave cha namah
Sankarāya cha,
Mayaskarāya cha NAMAHSIVAYA cha
Sivatarāya cha."
- Tait.S.IV

The famous Satarudrīya forms also the central portion of this central Veda. This is a description of God as the All, the All in all, and transcending all. In the Satarudrīya, Rudra is called Siva, Sankara, Sambhu, Isana, Sarva, Pasupati and Mahadeva. The destruction of our triple bondage - the Tripura ('pura' means body) is brought about by the Grace of Siva. Therefore, chanting the Letters Five has been the repeated admonition of the Vedagamas to reciprocate the gaze of the triple Eyed Siva. There is the daily need of food to replenish the wear and tear in the physiological system. So too is the need to re-establish that awareness of the Supreme source of knowledge and power and the constant remembrance of the Name effects this connection.

The Principle which underlies the practice of repeating mantras is that a seeker who so contemplates becomes converted into the mantric idea and the idea becomes the actuality. Since the repetition of the mantra is reserved for a realised soul, one must receive initiation into the truth (Siva-diksa) before one can repeat these mantras with efficacy. This initiation is usually done by a com-

petent guru. 'Tiruvartupayan' gives a fine exposition on the Letters five.

"It is the purpose of the Vedas and the Agamas and books connected with them to expound the meaning and purport of the five-lettered mantra, for it is through the pronunciation of this mantra that the state of advaita may be fully realized".

The mantra consists of the following letters :

Si - Siva

Va - the Sakti of grace

Ya - the soul

Na - the connecting power which activates the
"malas" or "impurities"

Ma - anavam or egoity

The benefit that is derived from pronouncing the mantra properly is that the soul which stands between the 'malas' and the 'tirodhana' - (veiling) Sakti on the one hand, and Siva and His Sakti (Si and Va) on the other passes from this position to the place between Sivam (Si) and His Sakti or grace (Va). Intone the mantra with Si first and place the Ma (anavam) last, so that it ceases to be dominant - Si Va Ya Na Ma. Va is the gracious Sakti which reveals Siva to the soul, which when imprinted makes the soul a body to God. Va in grace will lead the soul Ya to Si who will confer bliss.

"If one pronounces the mantra properly, the soul which stands between Va and Na - in other words, between Siva's Grace and Tirodhana (veiling) Sakti - will leave that position and stand between Si and Va, that is between Sivam and His Grace" - Tiruvartupayan : Chap.9.

Many saints and philosophers have extolled the glory of this Mahamantra as the Gem of life - Jeevaratna. The image of Lord Natarajah (Siva) has been interpreted as an embodiment of thought-forms underlying the sacred five letters - Si Va Ya Na Ma. Tirumular in Tirumantiram 2798, explains Si as Drum; Va as the out-stretched hand, Ya as the hand that protects the Souls, Na as the fire and Ma as the foot holding the demon muyalaka under. Similar references are found also in Unmai-Vilakkam V.33 & V.44

"The Agamas and the Vedas are the Five letters
The Puranas which include all are the Five letters
The Dance of Ecstasy of Siva is the Five letters
The realms beyond the thirty-six tattvas are the
Five letters".

The dance typifies the divine impulse set in motion by the Will of Siva's Grace to work out the release of the souls still under bondage. The pentad of Si Va Ya Na Ma unfolds this inter-relationship of the Anma with God, and hence the efficacy of its correct incantation. It is a sacred form of Siva, as attested by St.Tirumular:

"God created the five worlds with the Five Letters
He likewise created the different yonis
He likewise supports the phenomenal world with
these Letters
And with these Letters, He stands firm."

- Tirumantiram 966

Thus do the sacred Texts declare, depicting every possible practice of chanting the Letters Five, so as to enable souls to be united in Siva and never to be separated from His Eye of grace.

Tirumular explains in great detail the subtle meanings of the sacred mystic formula of the Letters Five, and relates it to the spiritual advances of the Sadaka. To the Seeker who has turned his gaze Godward, although the world is pulling him from behind, his meditation on the subtle Name, 'Sukshma Panchakshara' where God and His radiant energy of wisdom are in front and the soul in the middle is turned Godward, his yearning for Sivajnana - the light of pure Awareness is fulfilled. In the 'Karana Panchakshara', the soul is between God and the forces of Jnana in front and behind. The Soul is in the centre and on either side is God and His Grace. Then follows the next step of merging into Tiru-Arul or divine Grace, so that only two letters Si and Va are present. This is Maha-Karana Panchakshara, where we are imbued with Si Va, the Lord and His Grace - "Sakti in Siva, Siva in Sakti, they in me and I in them, indwell" - Tiruvacagam 21.1

The formula of the Letters five is the 'open sesame' to integrated living, where the anma is in intimate touch, with the connecting point between the awareness of the relative and the awareness of the Absolute. The sacred Name of Siva is the 'Eureka', that links the known with the unknown, and the silent with the active. Such enlightened consciousness is the immediate award of a life attuned to the total potential of Divine Grace.

The Śaiva Nayanmar extol the integral vision of Truth - Knowledge and Love embodied in ParaSivam, and the imperative need of the anma to cherish, sustain and develop its multidimensional links for the attainment of spontaneous fulfilment of life. The verdict of perfect fulfilment of life here and now has been sanctioned by a galaxy of the Saiva confraternity. Their imperishable records express their faithful testimony:

**"They may be evil doers, bereft of any good
qualities**

**But if they chant the Name continuously and
steadily,**

**They are sure to be saved from all dangers.
So Good is He. His Name is Namasivaya."**

- St.Sambandar Tirumurai. III.5

**"The natural outflow of Grace of the Upholder of
Dharma,**

It is revealed in the greatness of the Five (Letters)

Those who chant It steadfastly as enjoined,

They will be protected ever by the Supreme Guide".

- Tirumantiram 948

"Invoke the Letters Five and realise the truth -

That 'Paraparam' fills your inner being.

Freed from deceit and fear and disintegration,

It is your sole refuge, So I proclaim".

- Tirumantiram 957

**Here is one of the finest declarations of the charter of Freedom
for all mankind!**

**Therefore it becomes increasingly necessary to cleanse the four
antakaranas (inner faculties) - Mind, Buddhi, Ahankaram and
Chittam, and shake off the gloom of ignorance which clouds the
total vision of Awareness in Siva. There is an immediate need to
regain memory as did Arjuna at the close of the immortal discourse
in the Bhagavat Gita, and raise the value of human life by continual
remembrance of the Holy Name of Siva, Repository of infinite
wisdom and power. Truly, Enlightenment by the Triple Eyed Siva**

is a simple matter of conscious awakening into the Awareness of Supreme Fulfilment.

An aspirant who reads the poignant Namasivaya cantos of Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar perceives a sense of transformation of energy; he realises the 'spell' of his relationship to the Almighty Siva. There flows the transforming waters of Grace; the Divine will is at work within and he understands the experience of Sundarar when he sings that "Even if conscious efforts of the mind fail to pronounce His Name - The Letters Five - my tongue will go on repeating it, till a living contact is established between my Will and the Supreme Will that rules the World" - Tirumurai VII.2.1

Such intense awareness takes man beyond the bounds of rational thought, when he perceives himself to be in the grip of some sort of creative energy. Spontaneously he enters into the field of experience, as did Appar Swami who made real, the potency of Siva's Name. Though he was tied to a granite stone by the heretics and left to die in the mid-sea, he floated and was saved by chanting the luminous Name of Namasivaya.

Incessant search within, and inquiry into the true nature of the self awakens man, and a new process gets started. He realises the wide gaps in his mind and all his energy gets concentrated to break through the sheaths of ignorance. He begins to See from within and a break from habitual thought patterns is effected. By the remembrance of the Lord's Name, he contacts the spark of energy that tingles with vitality and fills him with great happiness. On the vibration of the Five Letters, he builds up the extra sensory perceptions leading to the deeper sense of consciousness.

The Saivites rejoice with the Poet-Saint Manicavasagar who in the Morning Hymn of Awakening wakes up the Lord slumbering

within the folds of his rigid thought habits. The poet is filled with Ammai-Appan's nectarine Grace and every canto in Tiruvacagam breathes with his deep reverence for that Luminous Siva who activates all creation.

"What service will Thou deign from men like us?"

"Come with Thy Saving Grace and energize
Weaklings that we are, Oh refreshing Energy."

Such insights can only be gained by a transmutation process at work, deep within every man. One has only to read a chapter from Tirukural to perceive that every spiritual condition has its laws as consistent as physical laws; and the moral laws enjoined in the Texts dealing with Aram - (Cosmic moral order), Porul (objective phases of activity), leading to Inpam (subjective phases of joy) are in turn found to be tuned to inner spiritual laws, consummating in Veedu or the Ever-Restful abode of Bliss.

A study of the original Texts leads the explorers of Truth to reverence not only to the accumulated Sacred Compositions of the Saiva Saints and Seers, but also imbibe their inner Experiences. From an earnest study of these "Treasury of Experience and Codes of Truth", and observing their eternal rhythms, the devout Saivites pass from possessing second hand external knowledge into seeing through the illuminating internal landscapes of our spiritual peers. This is direct perception and direct knowledge - the accomplished End of Siddhanta Saivism, the glory of the Flawless Eye of Siva.

Namasivaya Om
Sivayanama Om.

Chapter 7

THUS SPEAK THE KNOWERS

The Concept of Porul - subject and subject matter

The development of Saiva Religious Insights can only be understood by a thorough mastery of the Tamil language and literature, its linguistics, prosody, poetics and rhetoric in reciprocal correlation with the geo-physiography, sociological, aesthetic and religious values, compressed in the concept of Porul - subject and subject matter, in Tholkaapiam and Tirukural. In these enduring Records of Tamil Wisdom, we find the fundamental 'tools' to equip the Re-Searchers, East and West, with a readiness to find new meanings, rare inwardness and crystal-clear formulations of the Ultimate End of human existence. Any interpretation should be aimed at helping the common man on the spiritual way, which is the way of life. It implies a total commitment over and above the acceptance of the dogmas and creeds particular to that religious belief.

Sivajnana Yogigal in his Catechism of Sivajnana Botham states that the hallowed term 'Sivan' stems from the Tamil word 'Sivani' - meaning 'to inhere', indicating His immanence. He deduces that Si implies the Eternal Being, and Va connotes the Causal Power-Sakti. The root Sivan denotes intermingling, and is a Tamil word

connoting the Lord of the five-fold operations. Sivan is thus conceived as Pure intelligence and also final deliverance (Mukti).

In the Vedic texts, Sivam implies felicity (sugam) or prosperity and auspiciousness. He is also known as Rudra, one who destroys sorrow. Dr. Surendranath Gupta refers to the word 'Siva' as being derived irregularly from the root 'vas kantan' - 'one who fulfils the desires of his devotees', according to the Mahabharatam and the Sivapuranam Records.

Another key term in Siddhanta terminology is the word 'Maya' in Tamil. It consists of Mai and a meaning 'to conceal' and 'to become'. That fundamental substratum of matter into which every thing revolves itself as in involution and from which it evolves in course of time is indicated by the term 'maya'. It conveys to the Saivite, a knowledge of the first cause of evolution and involution, a fundamental Siddhanta conception. According to Vedanta, maya conveys the idea of the indefinable "is and is not" principle, that which appears but does not really exist.

The word 'Iraiyān', a typical Tamil term for God, like 'Kadavul' and 'Kantali' (that which exists without support), brings out the relationship of the anma (soul) with the immanent Lord - 'Iraiporul'. His is a unitive (ontraai), an intermingling (udanaai), and yet beyond (verai) inter-relatedness with the anma.

Prof. K. Subramaniam Pillai in his Book on Siddhanta Saivism avers that "we cannot think of a time when the Tamilians had not this Saiva Siddhanta system among them. Specific terms as "Uyir, Mei, Vinai, Vidhi, Veedu, Kadavul, Mukannan", indicate that even prior to its codification, the Tamils were accustomed to think in terms of Saiva Siddhanta concepts". It is no wonder that these early Source Books referred to the Saiva way of life in terms of Peruneri,

the Great way, Muthalneri, the First way, Senneri, the Perfect way, and in course of time assumed the title of Saiva Siddhantam, a term first used in the classic work of Tirumantiram. The first principles, practices and rituals of the Saiva Religion were systematically expounded in fascinating images, allegories and moral injunctions by Tirumular, the Author of Tirumantiram, who upheld the cardinal teachings of the Saiva Agamas. His accent was on a unitive vision, where he identifies Sivam with "Love".

"Anbum Sivamum Veralla"

"After knowing that Love is God

They abide in love, which is God."

- Tirumantiram 257

Such philosophic truths came to be pronounced more explicitly in what Pascal calls the 'Logic of the Heart', in the earliest of the Siddhanta Saiva Poems called "Tiruvunthiar" and Tirukalitupadiyar".

"How am I to say of what (nature) It is?

That It (Reality) is intrinsic, Rise and fly - Unthipara,

Unknown to external perception, Rise and fly - Unthipara".

At a later date, Sivajnana Botham takes up the refrain:

"The Lord who cannot be experienced by physical
sight,

Seek Him with the Eye of wisdom and introspect".

- S.J.B.Sutra IX

Thus the Eye of intuitive Wisdom unfolds entrancing avenues of realisation.

This intuitive knowledge which ignores a separation between subject and object has been assimilated into the religious consciousness of the Saivite fold. These early adherents of the Tirumurai canonical Corpus defined the spiritual pathway to ultimate Truth in terms of global insight. The meaning of the symbols can be understood solely by a kind of direct experience, partly artistic and not entirely emotive.

Consider the Form of Siva as Tiruneelakantan! The Devas and Asuras with the aid of serpent Adhiseshan churn the sea of milk in order to taste the nectar (amirta) of immortality - what happens? Poison begins to be emitted from the churning serpent, when to save the imploring Devas and Asuras, Siva drinks the poison and holds it in his throat. What benevolent act of 'Arulal' - Grace! The symbolic image of the blue-throated Siva frequently alluded in the Devaram Psalms and Cantos makes an abiding impression on those brought up in the Saivite tradition of Siva's infallible, infinite Grace.

The aim of the great exponents of Saivism was to exalt the infinite greatness of the Supreme Siva in mellifluous lyrical poetry in Tamil diction. Likewise, St.Sambandar pronounced in the last verse of each of his Cantos, what is termed the "Tirukadaikaapu", which literally means the sacred final protection. In it, he calls himself, the exponent of lucid Tamil poetry, "Seerkazhi Sambanthan" (Tirumurai 1.41). The medium used by him is termed 'Sentamil' 'Aruntamil' (precious) (263), Ontamil (resplendent) 291, "Intamil (Sweet 114), Puntamil (blossoming 194), "Maraivalarum" (fostering sacred writings 203) and the Essence of his revelation is the Supreme Transcendental-Immanent Sivam.

It now becomes clear that in Siva-Neri, the distinction between Poetry, Philosophy and Religion is indeed very thin, right down from the classical age to the modern era - "Enmanaar Pulavar" - "Thus speak the Knowers". They carry the imprimatur of yogic insight and mystic wisdom.

"So willed the Seers to reveal the Truth in perfect diction.

Their sacred words resound with invincible power".

The Glowing rays of Chit-Sakti

The Saiva Pathway depicts the potential, living, creative Energy known as Chit-Sakti, working on the consciousness of the self with its inherent obscurities, the enveloping illusion of the separate self and the denser involutions of matter. The terrible limitations of the senses keep the anma buried like a seed in the ground. The Saiva Peers expound the way for the anma's growth, from stem to foliage, from bud to flower, from unripe to ripe fruit.

They affirm with one accord the grand truth of the Beauty of Love, which is the omnipotent Divine Will. It abides deep within our being, and evolves the consciousness and matures through the ten stages defined as the Dasa-Kariyas. The anma which is on the spiritual pathway of the Saiva Neri relinquishes the 'I-ness', and attunes to the Eternal Being in the Centre, through the repeated cyclic processes of involution and evolution. This attuning to the splendour of Siva is the fundamental purpose of living.

Ours is a positive quest to read aright the letters on the Sign Posts leading to the radiant Kingdom of Auspicious Siva deep within the core of being, and to perceive the green light and make sure of the right direction at every turn; for deep, deep down pervades the vital

luminosity of Siva, the "ulloli", the beam of Grace which is enshrined within every one of us. It will silently go on transmitting our own wave-lengths of affiliation to the Resplendent Sun of Truth.

"If Thou deny Thy Grace, where will I go?

What refuge have I in this vast world of
going and coming? Call me to Thee".

- Tiruvacagam 28.1

The Saiva Nayanmar aver that such experiences are renewed, till the ripening processes get fully mature. Then Time, the unerring law of the phenomenal world will also prove non-real in juxtaposition with timeless Eternity, which lies hidden within this crumbling sheath of the human body. Siva, no longer a hiding player stands revealed as the enchanting Beloved, and the pining soul at journey's End exclaims with intense love:

"Verily have I seen Him with my own eyes -

The ambrosial yielding bountiful Grace;

The splendour of His Grace, I beheld.

You too behold

On earth His blessed Feet did tread,

I felt such peace, realising Him as Siva Beloved,

When in Grace, He made me His - Behold!

- Tiruvacagam 3.58.66

The Saiva Elect beneath His sheltering Feet realise that all is right as IT IS, and the way, the process of completion is right too. Thus spoke the 'Knowers'!

There is an urgent necessity today that the inheritors of this peerless heritage of "Sacred lore" should re-establish in modern

scientific vesture, the truth of the Suddha Saiva Siddhantam on the bedrock of the Saiva Agamas, classical Texts, Saiva Puranas, Tirumurais, Meikanda Sastras, and all the continuous Sacred writings of the Siddhar and mystic Saints, while at the same time forging links with the Vedic tradition as well.

"Divinely ordained by Siva is the immortal pathway
Faithfully adhere to the ancient track laid by the
Luminous one
To the valiant who can discern that He is Sivan -
With him, He abides in the eternal constancy of
Truth".
- Tirumantiram 1560

The Truth of His Radiant Immanence

For a global perspective of Suddha Saivam, in Essence and manifestation, fruitful insights into our sacred Scriptures will have to be systematically developed, and translation techniques into modern languages perfected, so that systemic, magnetic field forces can be released to cover the World Front.

The Refrain of St. Manicavasagar in Tiruvacagam is noteworthy:

"Praise be to Siva who wields sway over the South
Land,
Praise be to the Sovereign Ruler of all lands"
Tiruvacagam IV 164-165
Praise be to our Lord, Esa, the Luminous Light
Tiruvacagam IV.186

In the form of the Dancing Natarajah, Siva's all-pervasive relationship with the world of names and forms is praised by many

a Saivite explorer of Truth. As Siva dances with the universe as His theme, He reveals to Sages Vyagrahapada and Patanjali, the infinite truth of His Immanence, beginningless, eternal, sentient and blissful. Siva Natarajah's Dance of Immanence is symbolic of His shining Presence everywhere and as Ashtamurti, He unfolds the charm of the five elements viz., the reflection in the gleaming gems of the earth, in the rippling waves of the seas, flames in fire, ethereal movement of wind, and in the streaks of lightning from the ether, as well as the luminosity of the Sun, Moon and Purusha.

The Universe comes into being only when Siya fills it with His gleaming Immanence. Earth, water, fire, air and sky owe their existence to the fact of His immanence. His dance of evolution and involution takes place for the enlightenment of the universe. He is the all-pervasive Sky, the Sun that illumines, the cool crescent Moon that removes the fear of death and danger, the aquatic Elixir that fertilises, the Earth that supports life, the Sacrificer, the Fire that consumes evil and the inhaling Air that vibrates as the Pranava Om. They are his visual forms, seen and experienced in the lotus of the heart.

Luminous Siva's omniscience, omnipotence and immanence unfolds the Dance of life with its endless transmutations and transformations, revealing His Supreme Will, auspicious and dynamic, to uphold the world. As the One Entity that survives the deluge of dissolution, Para Siva restores the equilibrium of the Universe by transmuting potentiality to dynamism. The Dance typifies the eternal cycle of origination, protection, destruction and deliverance. It symbolises life, existence (Sat), enlightened consciousness (Chit), and unalloyed joy (Anandam).

The 'Knowers of Truth' witness this Dance in their inner soul by turning their senses inward, with the veils of bondage removed, so as to be filled with the joy of comprehending the experience of the cycles of birth, culminating in the bliss of immortality. The vision of the Triple-Eyed, Supreme Being, dancing in the lotus of the heart is Effulgent Siva in the zenith of auspiciousness: "Namasivāya cha Siva tarāya cha". He alone embodies the highest bliss. On the strength of investigations undertaken by illumined Seers of Truth and earnest Scholar-Philosophers with inquiring minds and alert perceptivity, depending largely on their "interior vision", the Way of Sivaneri, Senneri, Peruneri, Muthalneri and Arulneri is bound to open New Horizons to all Seekers of Truth:

"The Triple Eyed Siva's gracious Eyes attracted me.
To His Effulgent Presence, illumining me with rare
wisdom

I prostrate, O Thou splendour of Wisdom emitting
rays of light"

- Tiruvacagam, Sivapurānam 21-22, 33.

Undoubtedly, the experiential knowledge of Paraśivam and the attainment of His illumining Grace, as the goal of Siva Jnana Neri have universal appeal. On the recovery of its existing principles, and the application of existing processes will be found the luminous Insights into the eternal Verities of life, promulgated by Saivism.

"Immeasurable by words, context of logic,
Ever extensive is the luminous pathway of Grace"
- St. Sambandar.

Chapter 8

THE EFFULGENCE OF DIVINE WILL

Scientists are engaged in expanding the field of knowledge that will transform the world. The Srutis and Smrtis declare the totality of Knowledge, and the laws of nature are interpreted so that the totality of natural law could become a living reality for each individual on earth. They demand that man opens his awareness to assimilate the totality of knowledge.

In general, we have to look at the relationship between the fundamental categories of existence from different sources of tradition and find out how these fundamental principles are inter-related to the power of Grace in Siva. In the course of our reflection, we are able to perceive the links between the cosmic laws and the principles of consciousness activating within man and in the world outside. Also it becomes clear that the structure of the immutable laws of the cosmos is contained within our consciousness and experienced directly. There is an intimate link between what is expressed in our Religious Texts and the experiences of the higher states of consciousness within man.

Sakti-In-Siva

In our study of Sources we shall focus attention on the Pathi-Jnanam, (Pure knowledge) and the network of links between it and

the Pasu-Jnanam, which is the knowledge of the self and its practical applications in the development and fulfilment in life. Saiva Metaphysics recognise thirty six principles sprouting from the unmanifest state of primordial matter, the basis of all creation. From this level comes the different sprouts of natural law. Different sparks of energy, fine particles of different characteristics come up, from the totality of natural law. At the basis of dissolution stands Siva with his eight attributes. From this level of Pure intelligence, natural law begins to display its manifold values, from whence evolves the whole creation. In the field of the undifferentiated, unmanifest and indestructible is the ultimate Reality, Pure Knowledge, the substratum for the totality of natural law. Pure knowledge is the totality of Power or Energy, popularly designated as Siva-Sakti.

At the basis of creative activity, there is infinite organising power which can only be All-Knowing state of Pure Knowledge, whence the knower, known and the process of knowing are all in a state of harmonic wholeness. Omniscient Sivam is the totality of immense organising power, Omnipotent and pure consciousness, from whom springs the different modes and forms of creation, and the whole phenomenon of nature in an infinite order begins to function. The sub-stratum, the sole ground as we may call the Primal Mover is potent with all possibilities, the totality of the thirty six tattvas, or categories of existence. These constitute the expressed values in creation, while the basic value of Pure Knowledge is unmanifest.

In this transcendent field of Pure Consciousness arises the initial impulses of Nadam which is permeating all the elementary particles, and Bindu - "Sparks of intelligence", conducting the entire course of Universal life. It is the impulse of the infinite Para-Sivam

to open the Eye of Awareness that enables the dormant soul in the Kevala (unconscious) stage to awaken, structured in consciousness, and the value of life lies in the ability to master the power of nature.

Life has to be lived so that the full potential of life is enjoyed by the individual and when he is enjoying the full potential of life himself, he vitalizes the full potential of the natural law in his environment, and is in tune with the One Supreme Being. The Saivite views life as a whole, coming to conscious awareness where evolves individual life, enlivening in concord with the cosmic value of life. Thus all life is in consonance with the totality of the natural laws.

The individual therefore is structured consciously to contact the supreme value of the Omniscient Siva, who alone enables the full potential of life to unfold in fullness. Luminous Siva activates all aspects of life and allows life to be lived as a homogeneous whole. Such is the interplay of the thirty six constituents - tattvas - in the world of matter and man - in the macrocosm and the microcosm, enabling the eternal anma to live in harmony with all the expressed values of life in universality.

Saivagamas expound the unmanifest compressing to a point - Bindu. It has no dimension, minutely small and limitless. Man learns to invoke the unmanifest power of Siva in the inner core of his heart by chanting the Name of Siva. He worships manifest Siva in the Hindu Temples which are the repositories of the power of Siva-Sakti and by intense devotion, the worshipper's mind is drawn from the manifest to the unmanifest.

The poles of manifestation are Iswara and Maya. All qualities belong to Maya or substance. The world of matter is envisaged in the twenty four Tattvas or elementary principles enclosed in the

Iswara essence. In the karana body, the instrument of the most subtle experience, the soul is embedded in a state of immersion in bondage. The luminosity of Siva with His inherent and inseparable Sakti helps the soul to evolve in the world of Maya, experiencing the powers of desire, knowledge and action - Ichha, Jnana and Kriya. The "Thanu, Karana, Bhuvana and Bhoga" principles interact with the soul's experiences, and makes worldly existence colourful and dynamic with the interplay of opposites.

Each mode or mechanism of experience of Maya is termed a 'tattva' or a category of existence. The kancuka body makes the soul go through the five tattvas called suddha - Asuddha tattvas. They are kala, niyathi, kalā, vidya and raga.

1. kāla (time provides the function of the past, present and future
2. Niyathi is the principle of law and order
3. Kalā is the principle of division into parts and effects the removal of some of the anavam - the sense of I-ness, which prevents the soul from using its other newly acquired tattvas.
4. Vidyā is the activating principle which bestirs the powers of Jnana or knowledge.
5. Rāga is the principle of feeling which creates the necessary urge, without which, desire remains latent. In the soul's interaction with these tattvas in the kancuka body, the soul begins to grow in awareness with stronger perceptions.

All qualities belong to the Maya or primordial substance. The three primary qualities are Sattva which is conformity to essence

of being - Sat, a tendency to rise up to illuminating knowledge of Reality. Rajas energy is a tendency for expansion on a single level of existence. Tamas is inertia which is tendency to descend towards the obscurity of ignorance.

The Antakaranas (or inner organs of sensations) are the four psychical faculties of Manas (mind), Buddhi, Ahankaram and Chittam. Here the soul enters into interaction with the world, experiencing egoity, pain and pleasure, reflection and reasoning. Chittam denotes reflection - consciousness which acts as receptor of thought, but is unable to organise. Buddhi denotes universal intellect, the principle of determination and reason. Ahankaram is the consciousness of individuality with the sense of I-ness.

The sthula or the gross body provides the physical frame with which, the soul moves in the world of senses and attributes and participates fully in bringing his karma to fruition.

In a world of experience, the phenomenon of life-consciousness and freedom are linked up to the phenomena of matter. Universal experience shows us life, representing controlled and organised material groups. Consciousness is the peculiar and the specific property of organised states of matter. The science of matter and the science of life are complementary to one another. Complex groupings and psychic inwardness go hand in hand and lead to the harmonisation of knowledge, providing guide lines to human actions.

Matter and consciousness are rooted in the same cosmic process and are interlinked. Gazing into the Eye of Siva, man has his insight deepened. The principle of consciousness is the essential and fundamental phenomenon. The two complementary elements are

brought into unison, in 'being and action'. This is the unification of the individual and universal aspects of human being.

The significant purpose of living is to make the individual pulsate to cosmic existence, and enable him to live the totality of universal life in the unified field of Siva-Consciousness, as well as in the diversified field of activity operated by the Power of Siva-Sakthi. Such attunement with the universal life was established by our Saiva Seers and recorded in the Vedas, Agamas, and other sources of our tradition, for our guidance and application in the Saiva art of living. The totality of natural law became a living reality for these realised Seers. To their clear Awareness, all the laws of nature resided in the Prime Mover's Power - Pasupathi, and the released Pasu - the anma, moved accordingly to His rhythm - His Laws of nature and His modes of activity.

The form and structure have for long held the attention of the Saiva fold; the revealed Texts and the experiences of the Seers fascinated the Saivites, who were satisfied in the reconstruction of the experiences of the wonderful band of Saiva Nayanmars or Seers. What is required now is an intense awareness, a deep stirring from within to participate intimately in the direct communication of our Sacred Texts, and prove in our daily living, the validity of the luminous Siva Jnana pathway.

Such a pursuit will make it clear how profoundly the mind, intellect and ego working in unison get involved in making life meaningful. To take for example the basic value of light, the source of knowledge, and analyse its bearing on our daily life will bring home to us, the enormous potentiality of oli to link the gap between the inner life of man with the cosmic life of nature; eventually it

will lead to the unified field of Pure knowledge and luminous consciousness.

From spiritual practices prescribed in the Agamas emerge the truth that the source of speech is in the 'ego' of the individual self and the ultimate Source is in the effulgent consciousness of Sivam. Meditation and Japa with proper breath - rhythms; quieten the mind and freed from the activity of thought, the sadaka experiences the field of natural law. When consciousness reverberates in terms of natural law, every activity of that awareness will be in tune with the natural law. Then the whole of the universe outside will be in tune with the realm inside of man.

At this stage will be realised the integral life of peace and plenty, lived in practical awareness in a systematic and meaningful manner. The individual is then established in enlightenment. He experiences the benignity of life through all his expressions and activities. Man learns to live in tune with universality, and continually replenishes the energy value from the luminous Source within, by proper sadhana.

It is trans-logical knowledge that we experience in reading Manicavasagar's poem on 'Tirupadaiyadchi', where he lays bare the mysterious background of Pure Consciousness, the ultimate Reality. St.Meikanda Deva corroborates the profound revelation of Manicavasagar's direct intuitive knowledge in Sutra X, Adikaranam 1 of Sivajnanabotham thus :

"There is no I or mine; He is only That.
You are that; Repose at His Holy Feet.
That Supreme Lord is 'Thaan'".

If I see that which is Thaan, it is identity. It includes the Seer also. If I see myself, I become dual to myself. Meikanda Deva uses the pronominal term Thaan to denote "Being that is accessible to man through Grace". Thaan is inter-personal, rising above the concepts of "I, Thou and It". Thaan in Saiva terminology signifies the ideal of Siva-Sakti, that is accessible through Grace.

The will of man becomes one with the Divine Will of Grace - Luminous Power Centre and power-bearer commingle - "Orumaiyin Perumaiyum", experiencing Parama-Sivam in the Oneness of luminous wisdom "Ariyum Arive Sivamumam". This insight into the magnificent participation in the life and existence in all things into the individual self, accomplished by the illumining potency of Sakti, the Divine Will of Siva, is the focus of our study on the Luminous Eye of Siva. The stimulating truth that what is in the Macrocosm-Universal is in the Microcosm-individual as well, is a unique experience of the Saiva Explorers of Truth. In the light of the Sūpernal Vision of Siva has to be understood the nature and function of the thirty six categories of existence (Tat-tvas), the principles and laws that govern the material world and human beings, and the inter-play of their infra - and supra - relationships with each other.

The Vedas and Agamas have proclaimed the absolute sovereignty of ParaBrahman - Parasiva in his unmanifested and manifested forms and functions. In the human being too, they discovered a centre in infinite space and eternal time. This fundamental principle of the interlink between the microcosm and the macrocosm was intuitively perceived by the Seers and they held fast to it, never lost sight of it and applied its ruling guide lines to the daily conduct of life. They translated into practice concretely,

these value norms in all the pujahs, rituals and ceremonial worship enshrined in the Saivagamas.

Their primary aim was to achieve a total integration of the physical, mental and psychic processes leading to the wholesome fulfilment of the human being. To realise and recover the infinite within is the sole and supreme objects of taking human birth. This in a nutshell is the quintessence of the Transcendental and Immanent Refulgence of ParamaSivam, known from classical Age as Mukkannan - The Lord with The Triple Eyes.

Siva in His Pure Being, in an ultimate, essential Form (Sivarupa Lakshana), is knowledge which is both knowing and revealing. Like agni or heat functioning as solar energy, electric energy or gastric energy in (Tatastha Lakshana), so too, pervasive Grace (Will) functions in a positive way. Its manifestations respond to specific needs in relation to life and the world, and are extolled by the Saiva Seers as Tiru Arul, Arul Kann, or gracious Eye of Siva. Knowledge that conceals and knowledge that reveals is Grace. Mei-Jnanam or Pure Knowledge is synonymous of revelatory Grace in Saiva Siddhantam.

A general Will becomes a specific function in order to cause maturing of the impurity of the soul. Then it assumes the aspects of Ichha Sakti, Kriya Sakti or Jnana Sakti and initiates the cosmic operations, thereby effecting the evolution of the impure world of matter. Divine operations of Grace are conceived as transcendental and yet continuous with the phenomenal process. The transcendental splendour of Para-Sivam as Pure Being is extolled in the Saiva Tirumurais in its absolutely unconditioned level, prior to 'Being with Will'. In order to redeem the souls from bondage to liberation, the process of divine self-manifestation initiates the cosmic opera-

tions. 'Being with Will' - Nettikanna. The three Eyed one is comprehended as Grace and knowledge from the perspective of the bound soul in its interaction with the world of matter.

When human will is united with divine Will, (the third Eye), human action ceases to bind. For those not so united with His Will (Light-Centre), He metes out the "Karmic Law", to cure them of their natural obstructions. The life of man in tune with the Will of Siva is not an object of knowledge, but illumined life and can only be lived serenely in the full awareness of Siva's Grace. The half-male and half-female form of Arthanarishwara, Siva typifying the "He-She" nature of the world as stated in Siva-jnanabotham Sutra II, signify Siva's Third Eye. Spiritual insights into the uncharted realms of Siva's Grace are unravelled in the Vedagamas, and the classical Texts and the Saiva Sastras from the 5th century B.C. to the 14th century A.D. Throughout, the Saiva Seers have urged man to follow his own ordained duties in life, in obedience to the Will of Siva in the carrying out of His cosmic processes, and the removal of his natural obscurities and impurities.

"He makes all my actions, His Actions.

And so play we Thonnokam".

- Tiruvacagam

Chapter 9

SIVA OLI IN TIRUMANTIRAM

It is the Self Luminous Siva that St.Tirumular adores in his Tirumantiram Three Thousand.

"He regulates the Universe by formulating the cosmic laws and instilling the harmony of law and order. To those who conform to worshipful reverence of the effulgent Lord (Pirān), He is the Sun who illumines the path to enlightenment".

"Pathi Vazhli Kaadum pahalavanaane"

- Tirumantiram 45

"He is the ray serene of Pure Consciousness that lights up the hearts of those who worship Him".

"Vaaltha Vallaar manathulurum Jothi".

- Tirumantiram 39

"The Lord with the luminous Eye who emits such bright shafts of love remains unknown".

"Kannuthalaan Oru Kaathalin nitgavum"

- Tirumantiram 11

"My Lord shines as Pure Consciousness,
illuminating
everything by His ever penetrating radiance of
Truth (Sat) Awareness (Chit), and Felicity (Anan-
dam)".

"Ongolli Vannan, Emmaanai Iyatighal Jothi
Iraivanu-maame"
- Tirumantiram 10

The Third Eye of Siva signifies the gift of sight into the macro-cosmic and the microcosmic centres of "being and becoming". The sun and the moon are the eyes of the world, and man sees the phenomenal world with his two eyes, which reflect the Sun and the moon. The Eye of Siva is the symbol of the Grace of God irradiating pure consciousness - cit, caitanya, purna, Siva, the benign One, the highest Good and Bliss, integral experience, formless and yet informed with all forms and beyond the limits of time and space. The only channel through which we can have a glimpse, nay experience of the invisible world of consciousness and intelligence of Sat-Chit, is the All-Seeing Eye of Siva, which can penetrate to the deepest layers of existence.

In formulating Reality as the manifestor of the universe, it is conceived as transcendent and immanent. Siva and Sakti are not two separate Realities, but two phases of the same Reality. There is perfect equilibrium between Siva and Sakti and the integrality is designated ParamaSiva. Siva is the Reality inherent in all. Pure Consciousness - Illumination cannot be without self-consciousness, without self-illumination. Reality is termed Chit-Sakti - the power of Chit to reveal itself and to know itself. Thus Chit is the power of Self Awareness. Ananda is the power of Absolute Bliss.

iccha is Siva's power of Absolute Will to manifest the universe out of Himself. Jnana is the power of knowledge, of knowing the inherent relations of all manifested things among themselves and with His own Self. Kriya is the power to assume any form. These are not five different entities, but five aspects of the Siva-Sakti.

The relation between Siva and Sakti is one of perfect equilibrium, and regarded as one in two. We have seen that Chit Sakti, the power of Self Consciousness entails Ananda on the part of Siva. Bliss gives rise to iccha, the will to create. This cannot be fulfilled unless there is Jnana, knowledge of what is to be created and how it is to be created; this knowledge is followed by the act of creation, the power of which is Kriya Sakti. Universal manifestation is the outcome of the stirring of the Will of Siva and there is nothing apart from Siva; the constituent elements of the universe which are constants through the cycles of creation and dissolution and called "tattvas" can be nothing but Siva's Immanence.

The limitations exercised by the anavamalam - the impurity of egoity, mayamalam representing the thirty six categories that constitute the physical world of the finite, and the karmamalam that subjects the embodied beings to good and bad acts, are responsible for the non-intuition of the true nature of the self. It becomes clear to the souls in their differing planes of existence within the sphere of Maya, that they cannot free themselves from the sense of duality and realise the perfect integration in the luminous Siva-Consciousness without His Anugraha - Siva's function of Grace. The bound souls gradually proceed to free themselves from the fetters of differentiation and separateness of the external world of Maya and learn to regard the object "It" (Idam) to be within their own being (Aham), activated by God's light of Grace.

The luminous Eye of Siva enlightens the purified being to see the objective world with their diversities as a part of the subject, the see-er man recognises an object, as for example the eyes of a child as distinct from the child's body, even though they are an integral part of the body. The See-er then perceives that his own eyes are essentially part of his own being. In the penetrating light of Grace, the See-er advances to the experience of "I am this", with "I and It" (Aham and Idam) having a common substratum, and which are held in perfect equilibrium. In the growing awareness of Siva's Grace flashes the experience of "I Am", and in the inhering of the subject and object, there is bliss (anandam). The sense of separation that had darkened the soul's consciousness is completely effaced by the luminosity of Siva's Pure Awareness, and the soul experiences the realisation of "Avane-thaane" - "I AM THAT I AM" - in ecstatic bliss.

It is this intuitive and direct knowledge that ignores a separation between subject and object that gives rise to the deluge of bliss. Such direct knowledge is basically self-knowledge, a willing participation of the self to reach an intuitive awareness of the essence of things, and therefore to influence them from the inside. It is the knowing observer really who undergoes transformation rather than the object of knowledge.

The strong adherence of the Hindu to rituals and symbols reflect the necessity for closer co-ordination between himself and the play of natural forces. The movements of stars and seasons are all life processes, correlated with those of man. Greater is the need today, in order to resolve the hydra-headed conflicts in the world around us, that we understand the interaction of wills, where the movements of the world are viewed as forming a network of dynamic correlations and fields of forces. When Siva is awake, an aspirant

recognises himself in Siva, and there is no separation whatsoever. To recognise one self as that which has become or even is everything, to realise the unfettered state of being, to have the illumined insight and be suffused in bliss, to be free from niyati that is regulation or causality, this indeed is the goal of human destiny - the apex of liberation of the soul from its innate ignorance and impurity (anavamalam).

The restoration of the Sivatvam (Siva Awareness), the descent of Siva's Grace (Saktinipada), the illumination by Siva's Grace (Anugraha) can only be effected by Siva's unwinking Eye. In spite of the dispensation of grace, the soul cannot enjoy the light of Siva's grace if his consciousness and the instrument of his intelligence (buddhi) remain murky. Siva-Initiation unfolds the hidden essence of divinity, when the soul realises its own higher Self (Sivatvam); But to know the light of the Luminous Eye is not to experience the luminosity of Sivatvam, unless and until the purified, true self of man is awakened, and is in integral union with His Light. It remains for the soul to develop his third eye and SEE all as Sivamayam - in the likeness of Siva. To attain integral Sivatvam, the self must realise itself as the Integral "I", recapture the all-inclusive pure "I" by suitable spiritual disciplines as formulated in the Nine Tantras of *Tirumantiram*.

It is imperative that the buddhi (intellect) needs to be purified and followed by the rise of spiritual knowledge, the knowledge obtained by the spiritual element in the self. Siva's luminosity must penetrate into the interior core of man's being for the realisation of Sivatvam which is the state of ParamaSivam. It is the illumined state of equilibrium of Siva and Sakti. It is power and consciousness in time and eternity; sequence and simultaneity are both one and the same. These are the two phases of Reality.

Through Nirvikalpa knowledge, which is from 'Vikalpas' or conceptual determinations, the limited "I" (eye) of the individual is united with the unlimited I (eye) of its own higher Self (Siva-Sakti). The right means to such consummation is pure intuition, which can be obtained through knowledge of the scriptures, dhyana, uccāra, varṇa and external injunctions. Man's recognition of his inherent consciousness with Siva-Consciousness is the ultimate goal. It culminates in bliss. It is to be in harmony with life as a whole and fulfils all sides of human nature, of knowledge, love and will.

The Way and the Goal of Siva-Realisation have been unfolded in the direct records of the direct experiences of illustrious Seers like St. Tirumular, in whose transhuman and resplendent lives are immortalised the perpetual Effulgence of Parama Sivam. One gets a living comprehension of the unveiled spiritual Grandeur of their Insights, which continue to irradiate luminous bliss on successive generations.

Tirumular's Approach to Sivatvam

Tirumantiram is a garland of three thousand Mantras and contains the distilled essence of the Tamil Agamas. 'Man' means 'to think' and 'tra' is to protect. Hence mantra consists of cognition and meditation and protection from the bonds of life. The Text embodies the tenets of Saiva Pathway, 'Upadesham' (Reflection) on the goals of Saivism, Ritual practices, Yogic disciplines, Ethical codes, Temple worship and the various sacrificial yajnas and interpretations of puranic myths and symbols embracing the Saivagamic and esoteric doctrine of Saivism. In short Tirumantiram deals with 'Mci Porul' - Truth, the way and the goal to Siva-Realisation, the Supreme Truth. The whole Garland is strung on the chain of Siva-Sakti Unison, with the pendant of Anma-Vidya

or knowledge of the Self. The Sadhana, the means of realisation and the goal of 'Sivagathi' or Siva-Realisation are centred on the potency of the self Luminous Siva with His triple Eyes.

Tirumular's masterly study of the Luminous Presence of Siva is focussed on the magnetic radiation of Sakti-in-Siva. The Name hallowed in the "Letters Five" symbolises the whole gamut of the Saiva Way of life. The Five Letters that compose His Name - Na Ma Si Va Ya - set up centripetal motion towards Self Effulgent Siva.

"The Five-Letters form the Agamas and the Vedas,
The Five-Letters form the Puranas and Sacred lore
The Five-Letters form the Ananda-Dance of Siva,
The Five-Letters speed you to the light of
liberation."

In this way, Tirumular, the great Yogi-Seer, poet-philosopher and author of Tirumantiram makes available the essence of the Saiva agamic doctrines and philosophical concepts of the Vedas and the Agamas to a wider public, and Tirumantiram is classified as the Tenth Tirumurai in the Saiva Sacred Collections of Twelve Tirumurais.

Our approach to Tirumular's Tirumantiram is concerned with the impact of Lord Siva in his Transcendental and Immanent Forms on the religious consciousness of the adherents of the Saiva Pathway; it has special reference to the inter-relationship of the Anma with the liberating power of Divine Grace personified in the Triple-Eyed Siva, also manifesting as the Dancer in the etherial Hall of Wisdom at Chid-Ambaram. Penetrating insights into the mythic, yogic and agamic concepts of the Luminous Eye of Siva may be deciphered in this monumental work of great antiquity. From a preponderating

religious outlook, we begin to decipher a greater emphasis on the first principles and practices of Saiva religion and worship. The Classical Age of the Tamils had well-marked signposts to a wholesome life, through the norms of 'Aram' - virtuous conduct, 'Porul' - dynamics of work and wealth, and 'Inpam' - benign happiness, leading to a life of unsullied bliss in Siva - Veedu (Mukti).

Tirumantiram, while upholding these norms, surveys the gamut of life from various angles, incorporating the cardinal tenets contained in the nine Saiva Agamas mentioned in it. It expounds in three thousand stanzas a religious pathway which helped the people to activate their innate intelligence on the strength of experiencing God Siva as Love, while dispelling their gloom of fear, insecurity and ignorance. The Age of Tirumular has been generally ascribed to the period between the fourth and sixth century A.D. The Saiva-Nayanmars who wrote the Tirumurais followed by the Saiva Theologians, covering a period from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries reflect in a large measure the Saiva Agamic teachings and practices ingrained in Tirumantiram's monumental fountain of Suddha Saivam.

An understanding of the content-value of the Nine-Tantras (sections) based on the principal Nine Agamas will give us valuable insights not only into the flawless Luminosity of Siva's Grace symbolised in the Third Eye of Siva, but also into the Saiva Religion as practised by the Tamils in the age of Tirumular, one of the earliest of the sixty three Nayanmars included in the Grand Epic of Saivism known as Periyapuranam.

The first Tantra deals with the Divine Instruction and sums up the purpose of the work. The Anma (Pasu) is stimulated to acquire true knowledge of the Lord (Pathi) who is love; and it dwells on the pathway of Aram (virtuous living) and the Dhyana of contemplation leading to divine Grace. The stanzas in the First Tantra deal primarily with life of virtuous conduct (Aram), moral duties and the ethical code necessitated by the knowledge of the impermanence of life - fleeting is body, fleeting is youth, and fleeting is wealth. Therefore daily observances in ethical conduct, (sariyai) and ritual practices (kriyai) are enjoined as aids to the attainment of Truth, and the path of Bhakti (devotion) is advocated, leading to yogic union of the illumined Anma with the Effulgence of Sivam - Sat-Cit-Ananda.

The second Tantra deals with the Puranic tales associated with Siva's heroic deeds, Daksha's sacrifice, and the appearance of the pillar of Light in the Lingodhbhava myth. The significant agamic doctrine of the five-fold cosmic operations of Siva, 'Panchakrytia', and the gracious deeds of Sakti in Siva are clearly enunciated.

The third Tantra expounds the theory of Yoga, Yogapada, and the necessary steps in the practice of Yoga-Neri, highlighting the ethical norms of a religious centred life. It deviates to some extent from the aim of yogic disciplines put forward by the Yoga sutras of Patanjali and insists on the Realisation of 'Sivatvam' (communion with Siva) as the highest goal of the Bhakti Yoga Pathway. Here again, Tirumular praises Siva as the Revealer of the Vedas and Agamas which conjointly extol the efficacy of the Sivamantram - the Name of Siva - "Namasivaya - Sivayanama"

The fourth Tantra explains the science of Mantras or Upasana practices. Mantra Yoga is lucidly interpreted along with the various forms of Sakti as mantras. Also is described the different forms of chakras and mystic formulae connected with the worship of Sakti as the gracious Energy of Siva.

The fifth Tantra outlines the four pathways of Sariya, Kiriya, Yoga and Jnanam, and the facets of Sanmarga way, together with the different branches of Saivism. Tirumular bridges the gaps between the advocates of the karma kaandam (works) and the Jnana kaandam (knowledge) and makes a plea to follow the Saiva Pathways in conformity with one's spiritual dispositions, and not based on artificial barriers of caste or class.

The Sixth Tantra takes up the Guru Darsana and gives an exposition of the meaning of the Sacred Feet and the fusion of (Jnanam), knowledge, knower and known arising out of Grace. Siva is the Adī-Guru and Tirumular deciphers the relationship of the Sat with Satasat (anma) and bids the Saiva fold to seek the Guru in the chambers of the heart-space with intense devotion and one pointed knowledge of the Self.

The Seventh Tantra consists of data on the Six Adhvas, the Six centres of energy, Cakras, the lingas and the Atman in the forms of "prana, purusha, anu, pasu and botham". The author cites the experiences of a yogi and the types of yogic sadhana practised in the internal body, projected as a micro-cosmic mandalam. He unfolds the perception of the Lingas, the andam (world); pindam (body), Sadasivam (Guru), atma (self) and jnanam (knowledge); types of worship and rituals as Siva puja, Guru puja and Maheswara puja are also worked out in this Tantra.

The Eighth Tantra describes the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy and its relationship to other systems of Indian thought. It also deals with the salient features of God, soul and world, 'Pathi, Pasu and Pasam', the three impurities and the states of consciousness such as waking, dreaming and dreamless states, and the eliminating of egoistic and other impure tendencies. Finally all paths culminate in the knowledge and love of Self-luminous, Triple Eyed Sivam.

The ninth Tantra takes up the concept of Guru-cult, the Effulgence of Pure Consciousness, the various types of the Dance of Siva and the scintillating transmissions of the splendour of divine Grace. There is an illuminating section on Siva-bhoga (bliss) enjoyed by the liberated souls.

Tirumantiram is an integrated work on Suddha Sanmarga Saivam, where agamic, tantric, yogic, bhakta, jnana and siddha traditions are reflected in an integral whole. The cardinal tenets of Saiva Neri focussed on the Realisation of the Truth of Sivam, are expounded on the puranic, metaphysical and philosophical levels. The dominant role of the Guru who guides the seekers of Truth, 'Meijnanam' through the four well marked out pathways to the attainment of blissful union with Siva, 'Sivanandam', highlighting the liberating Grace (Sakti) of Siva, mainly through the worship of Lord Siva as the cosmic Dancer, form the central theme of Tirumantiram.

The highest Accomplished End (Siddhantam) according to St. Tirumular does not stop with the attainment of 'Veedu', or liberation of the soul from maya and from the delusion of duality. It reaches out to the attainment of 'Sivatvam', of Sivahood of the soul. To recognise oneself as the perfect harmony of being and becoming is what the soul should seek and realise. It is to be in

harmony with life as a whole, and satisfies all sides of the human nature, of knowledge, love and will. All action is the play of Siva-Sakti. In this realisation, everything becomes an expression of perfect Being, Consciousness and Bliss :

"In endless succession are light and darkness
Darkness recedes with the influx of light,
When the eyes perceive the light, darkness is not,
Likewise, the inner light dispels the darkness within,
And the soul merges in the light of Sivam".

- Tirumantiram 1788

"I wove a garland of fresh flowers for my father,
Yet there was no response of instant grace.
I scanned the sacred lore of mantras and tantras
But my heart sank low in retreat.
I soared high in tapas and lo I realised my Lord."

- Tirumantiram 1613

The fickle mind prances about like the young calf
Till the Adepts control it by tying it in the
hut (kottil)

The mid-point of the forehead. Then they realise
The Truth of the Lord's Presence in one's inner
being."

- Tirumantiram 1616

Tirumantiram enunciates categorically that the crystal clear brilliant light of pure knowledge with the flawless consciousness of the light of Grace indwelt with the finite being in benevolent well-being and integral harmony. The immaculate light in the form of Grace inheres integrally with that of the anna in the firmament

of Pure Consciousness, irradiating sparks of luminous awareness :
"Thus did Paramjyoti - the Self Luminous Lord illumine me"

"By His gracious gaze, Nandi with the radiant Eye
awakened me
And infused me with resplendent bliss
He cured me of life's taints and stains so darksome
And imprinted the coral of grace in the crystal clear
heart

- Tirumantiram 114

"When your inmost being is transmuted
by Siva's grace,

Gone is the need for any further tapas
Siva's bliss fills your whole being and draws you
Into the Company of the Truth-Seers - a fitting
award".

- Tirumantiram 1617

"The ignorant raise idle controversy about our Lord
But the devotee who invokes the Self-Luminous
One,

The Source of Effulgence, by intoning His Name,
Sivayanama

His gross nature transformed into gold, he attains
Sivanandam"

- Tirumantiram 2659

Self Knowledge, proclaims St.Tirumular, leads to the Splendour
of Siva.

"He who worships the Feet of God knows his self.
He who walks in virtuous conduct knows his self,

The Seer who perceives the truth of Siva knows
his self

The Lord is the intimate kindred to one who knows
his self
- Tirumantiram 108

Intimately bound up with the devoted love of man is the invincible light of God's Grace, illuminating man within and without and elevating his life on earth, thereby enabling Siva to shine perpetually in inseparable communion. In the Ninth Tantra of Tirumantiram, St. Tirumular interprets lucidly in the Section on Oli - Light, the fundamental concept of Light. If man can extricate himself from the entanglement of body-consciousness, then shall the light of Siva-consciousness illumine his intrinsic being.

"By eliminating base association with the material
and sense categories,
The an̥ma comes into its natural state of
consciousness
Then is effected the efflorescence of the Lotus
of the heart
The incandescence of Siva's radiance obscures the
sun's light."
- Tirumantiram 2633

"Know that the Sun and its satellites,
The moon and the Agni, the fire, derive their light
From the perennial Effulgence of Self-Luminous
Siva,
Who irradiates supernal bliss on animate and in
animate beings".
- Tirumantiram 2634

**Birthless and deathless is the All-pervading Sivam,
The sun and the moon are his right and left eyes
The fire that gleams on the forehead is His third Eye
His luminous Form beams with resplendent**

consciousness."

- Tirumantiram 2635

**The five elemental energies of sky, air, fire, water and earth
pulsate with the incandescence of Siva's Splendour.**

**The white flame of transcendent Sivam emanates the crimson
sparks of Sakti. That testifies the truth of Para Sivam's, Paratholli
- His All-pervasive luminosity, infused with the variegated rays of
Grace - 'Villankolli'. Here in is ingrained the light of the "Five
Letters" - Varolli. "Ullankolli" points to the light of grace indwell-
ing in man's interior being, like the flower and its scent. Thus these
luminaries reflect the effluence of the majestic Splendour of Para
Sivam" - Tirumantiram 2636/2640.**

**Tirumantiram highlights the concept of Anma as a divine-
human entity, as a mode of consciousness in which the individual
human being feels connected to the cosmos as a whole. This
ecological awareness that man is linked in unitive experience of
oneness ('udanaai') with all natural and social phenomena is fun-
damentally spiritual and forms the crux of Saivism. The nine
Tantras deal mostly with non-material needs of self-actualisation
and genial inter-relationships, which bring about a value shift from
material evolution and growth to inner growth, effecting experien-
ces both liberating and enriching. It is a direct and experiential
understanding of unitive harmony with the entire human family and
the universe. Self assertion gives place to self organisation and
social justice.**

In such an integral relationship of union - "Ontraai" there is no opposition between Pathi - the Self Luminous Lord, Pasu - anma, and the world of sentient and insentient matter - Pasam. The ultimate Reality crystallised in Self Luminous ParaSivam is transcendent. It is also understood as an inward, interior phenomenon - the inwardly eternal One, where Reality is conceived as immanent, operating as the material world and within the material world in myriad ways. Thus transcendence, internality and immanence can be simultaneously predicted of the Self Luminous Parasiva.

The ultimate Reality in Tirumantiram emerges as transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal, feminine and masculine, and has remained constant down the ages, in a world of differentiation, where men's faith varies, traditions evolve but Siva endures - The Luminous Triple-Eye of Siva is the extrinsic representation of the intrinsic movement of the dynamic force (Sakti) in perfect harmonic illumination of the inner chambers of one's being by Sun, Moon and Fire centres within.

"In unison, I experienced Paraparam, Absolute
Lord.

In unison, I experienced the bliss of Sivam-
Sivagathi

In unison, I experienced pure Consciousness

In unison, I witnessed many cyclic terminations".

- Tirumantiram 2953

"There is the mid-point spatial centre of the
forehead.

When you intently gaze at it, it emits the
scintillating mantra

It is the radiant abode of the Lord who is the
Life of life.

It is Chid-Ambaram, the Ethereal Space where in I
commingled."

- Tirumantiram 2724

Siva-Realisation exults triumphantly in Siva-Anandam - perennial bliss.

Chapter 10

TRUTH REALIZATION - INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC PERSPECTIVES.

In our search-light on our early Source Books, we discern an interplay of the subjective and objective phases of life. It is the knowing observer who undergoes the transformation, rather than the object of knowledge. Such an awareness demands that everything should be viewed in the perspective of qualitative and concrete, rather than quantitative and abstract aspects. Attempts so far made by foreign scholars to comprehend and imbibe the absorbing truths and practices underlying Saiva worship and rituals have not been quite successful. Our reliance should be first and foremost on sharpening our own Insights into the Treasury of knowledge communicated in our sacred and mystic corpus. These transmissions, consistent in concordance and continual in accordance with Revealed Truth have been transmitted by the Saiva adherents from pre-historic ages right down to this century. It is our sacred duty to keep it in circulation and not to by-pass, but always to remember its undying heritage in the words of the poetess, St. Avvaiyar. "Live and walk in the light of Sivam. Be good and do good and associate with goodly devotees steeped in the love of Siva in order to love all".

Tirukural Transmissions

In our study of luminous Insights, one of the key Kural couplet is taken for critical study to illustrate the qualitative view of things. Man does not merely think with his mind. The whole man, including his cognitive, intuition, volitional and creative faculties, experience dynamic reciprocal relationships. What is the significance of Truth Realisation - "Mei-Unarthal"? Sage Tiruvalluvar unfolds the meaning of the key word, the unique term "Mei", and how to translate Truth-knowledge to Truth-Realisation. In the Tamil language, the word Mei connotes not only truth, but also body. The awareness of the transient body, Mei, as an object of change, decay and death leads to the higher awareness of Truth infinite, known as Mei or Unmai in Tamil. Thus, the term Mci is used for both body, an impermanent, finite object, as well as for the infinite Truth. Permanence and impermanence, unchanging and transient aspects of reality exert their gravitational pull on man, and coalesce in harmony in the core of man's essential being.

In the section on Truth-Realization, "Mci-Unarthal" in Tirukural, Tiruvalluvar reverberated the cosmic law of affinities, of integral links in human environment and activity. He warns mankind against mean company.

"Be wise in the knowledge of affinities (associations)"- 46.7

"Man's flexible nature is influenced by his association,

Even as the water aligns itself to the soil
Through which it flows ever and anon". - 46.2

"The pure thought and the pure deed come from pure company - 46.5

The secret of living a wholesome life is unfolded in two significant Tirukural couplets from "Mei-Unarthal" or Truth-Realization.

"Epporul Ethanmaithu aayinum apporul
Meiporul kaanpathu arivu".

"Whatever the object and whatever its ostensible
nature,
It is wisdom to see behind each appearance its
essential Truth".36.5

"Saarpunarnthu Saarpukeda oluhin mattallithu
Saartharaa Saartharum Noy."

Realising the innate reality in everything, be detached
(cling not). Then the ills of attachment can no longer
bind you - 36.9

The key words are Saarpu and Oluhin. Be aware of the Supreme Reality of Truth, the support (Saarpu) of existence. It brings about a "holdfast" relationship of the anma with the reality of Truth. Simple seems the way, but difficult is the attainment of the goal. Abidance with Truth can ward off the gloom of sorrow. The nuances of meaning conveyed in that single word Oluhin denoting "inhering, being detached, thinking, feeling and acting in unison", is full of significance. It opens vista-visions of the gravitational resonances of the anma's inseparable communion with the eternality of Truth that is God - "Sarpunarnthu". It also brings to the fore, the intrinsic nature of the anma to lean on either the ever-changing wordly props, or to seek the support of the unchanging Being.

It is an essential discipline to diagnose the subtle usage and the meanings of key words, and absorb the inner essence of the context. The form and content of the Tamil word saar of singular beauty merges into its proper function of commingling with the strong support of the omnipresent and omniscient Siva with the Triple Eye. Once the anma turns to God, only then can man recover from the deadly disease of falsehood that has clung to the anma for long - "Saartharum Noy". When man realises the value of clinging to the eternal support of the Supreme One and realises his true self, and adopts the illuminating way of Truth, "Saarpunarnthu Oluhin", assured is his freedom from the pangs of suffering - "Mattallithu Saartharaa"

At this stage, Thiruvalluvar recalls Tholkaapianar, the Father of the Tamil Grammar of Life called Tholkappiam; he takes us gently to the conative field of aesthetic experiences outlined in the "Meypattiyal" Section of Tholkaapianar, and into the inner chambers of the recovered anma. Here the allegory of the wordly disposed anma turning to the illumining support of the luminous God gives rise to the rasa, aesthetic feeling of amazement at the cessation of its sorrow - saar tharaa. No more fear! No more suffering! The mood of dejection changes to certitude in the use of the word 'oluhin' - if you turn God-ward with submission and love, and seek the enduring light of Grace, then you will be released from your entanglement with the stumbling blocks of the world. Thus revolving in the gloom of fear, wonder and desire, the anma finally moves on - to the luminous Bliss of Siva. It is the fulfilment of exalted radiance and felicity - "Sirappenum semporul kaanpathu arivu".

The key furnished by Tholkappianar to Tiruvalluvar's Kural, leads to the appreciation of an important facet of Saivism. Here is first hand proof of the inter-relatedness of spirituality and poetry,

aesthetics of beauty and goodness with religious consciousness, pointing the way of perfection, the "Senneri" of enlightened Saivism. This is also described as the "Peruneri" -the Great way, leading to the accomplished End that came to be known as Saiva Siddhantam.

The world of animate and inanimate nature impregnated by the immanence of Sivam presents an attractive picture of integrated wholeness. These aspects are reflected in our social system as well. When the enlightened Seers and Nayanmars penetrated the network of complex relationships, they perceived by direct experience, the anma's mutual inter-actions. Thereby they discovered the simultaneous inter-dependent transactions between multiple components and validated the axiomatic truth, that the nature of the whole was different from the sum of its parts and that the cause would invariably be hidden in the effect. This is Sat-Karya-Vadam. By introspection, man's Insight into the co-relational fields of fundamental processes gets further heightened. The ancient Hindu Seers discerned everywhere (aham-puram) extrinsic and intrinsic links - unified with interaction. "This world is neither a blot nor blank. It means intensely and means well".

The primal phoneme 'a' in Tamil அ becomes inter-related with the consonant group of letters in a dynamic linguistic setting. By the use of this simile, the simultaneous interaction of Bhagavan (God) and the anma in the stage of the world is unfolded in the first couplet of the classic Tirukural.

"Ahara Muthala Eluthellaam Aadhi
Bhagavan Muthatre Ulagu."

- Kural 1

"The letter 'a' is the primal phoneme of all the letters.
Likewise, Indispensable substratum is the Supreme
Lord who is immanent in the Universe".

The trunk of an elephant is one only, but it performs the functions of the hand, and smells and inhales the breath as well. The two separate entities, the hand and the nose are held in unison. In form the two are one, but in function it is two-fold. "This is That, That is This" - Olivillodukam 19. It is a non-dual state of union brought about by Siva's light of Grace, illumining one's intuitive knowledge.

Next we examine the functional role of the term Vinai - Take the word, "Kanma vinai". The Siddhantic view is that the anma identifies itself with anything that it contacts and uses it as an instrument. The senses, mind and organs of activity are all instruments of the anma, without which it cannot know or act. These instruments, which are unintelligent in themselves, cannot feed the anma with intelligence. The intelligence of the anma is rendered dormant by the bond of darkness termed Anavam. When the anma acts in the embodied condition, the good and bad effects of deeds are termed karma or kanma vinai.

"Paal varai deivam vinaiye"

"Paal athu aanai"

Tol : Sol.58

Since the activity of the anma when it is related to the "anavam" and "maya" bonds, is eclipsed in shades of darkness - "Oli maalgun seivinai" - kural 66.3, then "Seivinai", which is the performance of action can also entangle the anma in the results of its actions. This is termed karma or kanma vinai

Tirukural has more than six sections devoted to describe the salient features of Vinai - the purificatory act of doing. "Nalvinai and Thivinai" - deeds good and bad - cause births and deaths, besides effecting manifold psychic experiences. It is committed through thought, word and deed. It takes the form of merit and demerit, producing its two-fold result. At the time of dissolution, vinai sinks to the substratum of impure maya as ool or destiny, cosmic decree, or vidhi awaiting transmigration.

"Ool is His ordinance, preordained"

- Kural - 4.38.7

The subject of the outcome of deeds leads us to a clear understanding of the five-fold activity of Siva-Creation, Preservation. Dissolution, Veiling and Anugraha or Grace. So also is the import of the "Letters Five", the name of Siva extolled in the Saiva canonical works, to dispel the gloom of unknowing and non-seeing, and immerse in the illumination of Grace ineffable.

"The Name of our Radiant Lord is Na ma si va ya"

- Tirumarai iii.iv.

Fully authenticated, irrefutable and indigenous is the Name Si va denoting Siva-Sakti, popularly designated as "Iraivan - Iraivi". From the root syllable Siva arises the causative term Sivan commingling and immanent everywhere and in everything. Tiruman-tiram, Karaikal Ammaiyar's hymns, the earliest of the Tirumurais have innumerable references to the transcendent immanent Being, Siva in co-relation with the anma and the phenomenal world, thereby refuting categorically the Western Philosophers' theory of the limitation set upon Siva's transcendence and the normlessness of souls:

"All lights are not lights to the wise
The only light is Truth"

- Kural - 30.9

"Irul neenki inpam payakum marul neenki
maasaru kaadchi yavarku"

"When delusive darkness recede, then shall the
pure ones

Of unsullied consciousness enjoy flawless,
radiant bliss".

- Kural 36.2

In the accumulated and continuous tradition of the Hindus, Dharma in all aspects of life is claimed to be the chief regulating factor, and refers to the religio-ethical ideal, the moral law which sustains the world, the society and the individual. Today it embraces the whole of the religious life of the Hindus, and includes all ritual activities, ethical duties, righteousness, virtue, justice, property and beneficence. We thus see that an understanding of the Hindu scheme of values is essential to comprehend the essence of 'Sanatana Dharma', of which Saiva pathway is an integral pointer to the goal of liberating oneself from the impermanent bonds and attaining the Freedom of the self by the luminous Grace of Parasivam. Tolkaapiam, Tirukkural and the Agamic sources revitalised the religious tradition and the fusion of diverse shafts of light strengthened the flexibility and dynamism of the Hindu faith in general and Siva Jnana Neri in particular.

The Radiant Eye of Grace in Tiruvunthiar and Tirukalitrupadiyar

The Author of the Hymn of singular beauty of St.Uyyavandha Deva, is the first in the line of the Saiva Philosopher - Saints known

as the Santanachariars, who codified the philosophical Truths embedded in what St.Tirumular clarified as Saiva Neri. It means the abidance with Siva's will. Tiruvunthiar unfolds some exquisite patterns of Divine Grace underlying the Siva-Sakti union symbolised in the scintillating Third Eye of Siva. The basis of wordly existence is to be found in the supreme ordinance of Parasivam in and through the function of His Grace.

"When our acts seem as no more ours, I-ness
too vanishes.

All acts become the Lord's acts - Rise and fly -
unthipara

And Himself He reveals - Rise and fly -
unipara"
- Tiruvunthiar, VI

The belief that all things are pervaded by Him, produces the removal of innate impurities, as are consistent with the development of the cosmos as a whole. The idea that "I am the doer" is hard to eradicate on account of the subtle working of "Anavam", the self-assertive egoity. The true nature of the self is to discern that the Supreme Mover of all initiative to action is the Lord. "He abides as Bliss in the purified ego-less self". "Play the Game, Be watchful - unthipara", IV.

Dissociation of the 'knower' from the body and the senses is the first step to attain His beautiful Grace. The soul being caught up in the body and the world composed of the five rudiments of earth, water, fire, air and ether, runs after the senses in pursuit of enjoyment. Discrimination is therefore needed to dissociate the mind-stuff (chittam) and 'ahankaram' (individuation), which is the

innermost I-ness from which revolve 'Kalai' (energy-valve), 'Viddhai' (consciousness-valve) and 'Ragam' (will-valve)

St.Uyyavandha Deva suggests in Tiruvunthiar Ode, that as the ball flies up on the force of a hit from the racquet, so also Siva hits at man's "Triple malas", and sends them flying away, thereby freeing man to enjoy the magnitude of His Jnana Sakti - the pure knowledge of illumined consciousness.

"The dormant mature dame is stirred to awake,
whence He with Her in amity knit - Rise and fly
Proclaim that you have seen your true self-

Rise and fly - 14.

The dormant lady is the Mother of all, the Lord's Sakti, who has been with you all along, but unknown to you. Her influence at first is only latent in your consciousness, till the God-Guru activates her from within. She is the Source of power and light. Luminous Grace works through the Preceptor to extricate the anma step by step from bondage to the elevation of union with Siva, the Supreme Self.

St.Pattinattar has sung in a similar strain on the irradiating grace of the divine Mother.

"The soul arises after severing its ties with
delusive allurements of maidens and sense objects,
And approaches the Mother, embodiment of Grace

Divine,

Whose clasp he lets go only to unite in oneness
with the Father,

The Lord of Kachi-Ekamba!"

The enlightened soul has come into Being, in non-dual experience of blissful beatitude - 'Nishtai' in Siva.

It is not negation of the world nor of the Soul. To the awakened man of realization, the world is and is not; the ego-self is not; All that he experiences is the felicity of Sivam, the Father. He alone exists-the Pure Being-the impact of 'I-hood' is set at naught, before the source of all power and grace. The negation is not of the thing itself. It implies withdrawal. The polar star is paled before the mid-day sun!

"He who for ever scintillates in my heart centre,
And bides in the crown of my head - Rise and fly.
Praise be to Him - Rise and fly
He indeed activates the Sakti of Grace"

- Tiruvunthiar 44

The efficacy of Divine Grace here personified as the Dame of Grace is praised by St.Karaikal Ammaiyar, another of the early Saiva Saints in her Ode to Wonder.

"It is the Grace of Isa that rules the world
It is Isa's Grace that destroys births.
It is by Grace I'm enjoined to intuit Siva
By Grace I realise the eternal Truth for ever".

St.Uyyavandha Deva extols the radiant Eye of Grace of the peerless Siva in his Tiruvunthiar opening verse:

"Ahallama yaarum arivariya thaporul
Sakalamai vanthathentru Unthi para
Thaanaaka thanthathentru unthi para

That is Transcendent, Incomprehensible, yet
Self manifesting, He moves in Immanence, Rise
and fly - Unthi para
It is His will to bestow Himself in all, Rise and fly -
- Unthi Para

Tirukalitrupadiyar - The lustrous Wisdom of Siva's Grace

This work assigned to the year 1177, contains the quintessence of the lustrous Wisdom of Siva's Grace in 100 quatrains. The Author, Tirukadavur Uyyavandha Deva has given a commentary on the earlier work known as 'Tiruvunthiar' consisting of 45 triplets by his Parama Guru, Uyyavandha Deva of Tiruviyalur.

In the first stanza is a poetic image of God as Ammai-Appar, signifying the motherhood and fatherhood of God in all Creation and yet glorified in His transcendental state.

"Know that Ammai-Appar (Siva) is the Mother-
Father of the world
As Ammai-Appar, He comes to bestow His boon
of Grace,
Yet Ammai-Appar transcend all empirical worlds.
- T.K.P.1

The soul identifies itself with the world in the state of bondage, like the crystal that reflects the colour of the object kept close to it but not its own. When the Supreme One awakens the soul from its bondage to the senses and endows His Grace, then is the soul united to Him alone in bliss ineffable.

"He eradicates my faults, bestowing grace on me,
His worshipper,

He abides in my contemplative thought. When
Grace ripens in me,
In majestic splendour is He seen in whatever
I behold
In my experience, He mingles in communion".
- T.K.P.95

In our study of Tirukkural, we dwell on the nuances of the key word - support or "Saarpu" - to delineate the innate relation of the soul with Siva in the exquisite and well known kural - Meiunarthal 9. The seers aver that he who becomes aware of the true support rejects all other flimsy supports which lured him earlier. It is the most effective panacea for the cessation of sufferings at all levels. Supported by Siva's luminous Grace, the bewildering and creeper-like miseries of all living beings get uprooted completely.

Here we find a fascinating quatrain of equal beauty using identical metaphorical language, to unfold the innate relationship of the illumined soul with Siva. The purified soul has got rid of its karmic bondage, by the liberating knowledge of the Truth of Siva's radiant Grace, flashing from His Third Eye.

**"Realise the unchanging Support and give up the
changing supports.
And hold fast to It alone in contemplation true".**

"By giving up the leanings to the world, one gains
Peace ineffable.
So shall cease all sufferings due to the taint of
deeds".
- V.34

"Saarpunarathu Saarpukeda Oluhin."...

- V.34

The realisation of Sivam is the culminating experience of the enlightened man of God. The inherent working of the "Vithu" - seed of Arul Sakti" - in the soul releases the liberating knowledge of Sivam and leads to the realisation of Truth "Meiunarthal", what is referred to in verse 57 as "Meijnanam". Like Ibsen's 'Brand' who hammers into the depths of the inner layers, so too the great Saiva Seers reverberate the intuitive cry of the soul for the refuge of the unfailing support of Siva's luminous Grace.

In man's quest for the pure illumination of God - Consciousness, it becomes imperative to sever all extraneous affiliations and abide in the one unchanging support. The accomplished goal of life has remained constant down the ages, and the resounding phonemes in Tamil language too have not changed in communicating the fundamental concept of the awakened Soul and its goal.

The author refers in Verse 24 to the practice of deciphering Truth from multi-dimensional angles, as such diagnosis tends to eliminate the alienation between "this subject and that object". The 'Seer and the seen' are perceived as non-dual. (V.24). That the illumining love of the soul in its intrinsic essence commingles in an indissoluble union with luminous Sivam is implied in the key word - discerning the true support, Saarpunarthal - (Verse 34). The inseparable affiliation of the support - supported is implied in the Tamil term "Saarpunarthal" and it seems a more appropriate term than the term "advaitam" used to indicate the non-dual relation of the anma with Siva.

In another stanza of great beauty the poet-mystic communicates in wordless music, the tinkling cymbal-clad dancing Feet of Grace

of the Cosmic Dancer pointing to the Summit of 'Ever-Rest' (Veedu) which lies beyond all sound vibrations. It highlights the brilliant essence of Arul-Sakti or Pure Grace attained by the liberated souls. In verse 44, the sincere worship of the formless-form of Siva is described in fine metaphorical language.

"To See Siva's formless form in his self,
To worship that Sivalingam adoringly,
To bathe His Lingam in the waters of love,
To intuit oneself as a fragrant flower
And offer that bloom so that it fades not.
Such worship grants one immortal bliss"

- Tirukalitrupadiyar 44

It is through this process of internal worship that the seeker by his own subjective experience will get illumined by divine Grace, and so apprehend the Reality of Siva. Singing His glory and extolling the gracious means of reaching the goal is one way of cultivating one's own inner faith in the efficacy of the love of Siva, as did St.Manicavasagar in "AchoPadikam" or the Garland of Joy. "Oh! The divine Mother's graciousness to me, Whoever can realise such Grace, O Wonder"! In like manner, is reflected the jubilant joy of the author of Tirukalitrupadiyar, as he recalls the dazzling transforming Grace of the Lord in the last verse of his poem of exquisite cadence, proclaiming the commingling of Siva's infinite felicity within him, and drawing him into the fold of His illumined lovers.

"He who has commingled in me has made me
His own
Entwined in love, I have become His servitor,
I have known who I am and thus enlightened,

Henceforth I move as one, with His illumined
lovers".
- T.K.P.99

Irupa Irupathu - The Light of the Guru

The Truth Seer, Arulnandi Sivachariyar, elucidates the 'Accomplished End' of human existence in a fine quatrain called Irupa Irupathu. We give some quotations from this Poem on the role of the Siva-Guru, who is an indispensable Guide to mortal man to restore his distorted sight and letting in the light of divine Grace, and thereby enabling him to SEE the vision of Truth, and attain Siva-Realization.

"Removed were my bonds when I reached your Feet,
Oh Guru so sweet, who shines with the Eye of
Grace.

When I thought I was different from you,
You restored me to know mySelf; Self realised,
Oh Truth-Seer, you imprinted non-differentiation.
All-gleaming is your Grace surpassing Speech.
What is aught will never cease, nor aught
come out of naught; what ever Is, Is His Will".

The illumining experience of Truth is at the foundation of a seeker's yearning for the attainment of the flawless light of Grace. Here is another moving cry of the heart of man.

"His Luminous Self radiating rays of Grace
Eliminated my sense of "I and mine",
His splendour illumined me in inseparable union".
- Irupa Irupathu 18-21

The paradox of the Guru's grace "eliminating me and mine", and "illuminating me in his splendour" opens up new Insights. It is a lucid example of the "Ananya" concept unfolding the harmony of the inseparable oneness of the subject-object. In Quatrains 18 and 20 are delineated the entrancing light of God's Grace in the role of the Guru, ever at work in all stages of human life, in concealment at first, expanding into boundless compassion and finally effecting the communion in bliss with Sivam :

**"My birth's real reason not perceived
The earth's great Lord, I thought I was.
Untruth for truth I did mistake;
The earth's vain things I sought, not Him.
In me, He was concealed, yet moved
With me! And what hid myself and Him?
My distorted vision of "I and mine".
Yet he emblazoned me and blazed a trail
In bodies, births and in all the worlds,
Entering when I did, and leaving when I left,
And endless karmic fruit did cause
Conforming to cosmic Law, without ever
leaving me.
He became my servitor - The seeing Seer
Of the play of births and returns, who
Stood in concord with myself, my Father!
Filled with glowing love, He commingled
In unison with radiant Grace and inclined
My heart to radiate His infinite felicity
Which can destroy the world's untruth.
He disclosed the knowledge of "me and Self"
His Grace and Self-luminosity shone aloft,**

When myself became fully annihilated.
His actionlessness and my own self effacement,
He revealed, My Lord of Grace,
What wonder did Thou raise in me!"

- Irupa Irupathu 18.1-20

Tiruvārudpayan - The Fruits of Grace

Tiruvārudpayan is a work of one hundred couplets divided into ten sections, and deals with the manifold impact of Arul or Grace on human existence here and hereafter. The symbolic Eye of Grace - Arul-Kann - connotes the All-filling light of Parasivam, according to the Author Umapathi Sivam.

Saivism extols as one of its salient sparks, the entrancing luminescence of Arul - Grace Divine. The Srutis and Agamas and the Saiva Canonical Sacred Texts proclaim its Supreme glory. This resplendent aureole of Siva emanating from the Third Eye and Radiant Feet is the sole remedy for effecting the final liberation of the soul from the devastation of the triple bonds and the oppressive and aggressive domination of the 'tattvas'. In the term, Maya, 'Ma' signifies 'to contract' (dissolutive activity) and 'Ya' signifies 'to expand' (evolutionary, creative activity) of primordial matter. This Maya together with the impurity of Deeds, Karma malam and the entrenched, inherent quality of individuation known as Anavam, keep the soul in bondage. When the souls attain the inseparable communion with God, they experience in-effable bliss (verse 78). "The magnitude of His majestic gaze is immeasurable".

Umapathi Sivam, the Author of the "Fruits of Grace" emphasises the fact that 'A' vowel, (Uyir) is the life force to all other letters of the alphabet. Even so is God, the life of life to all souls, and the Supreme Intelligence. Siva's relationship with the soul can be

stated to be apart from the souls, as well as in union, or linked in togetherness - "Veraai Ontraai" and "Udanaai".

"Indispensable is the letter 'A' அ that embodies
knowledge.

Likewise invaluable is the refulgence of the light
of Grace".

- T.A.P. 1

We have already noted in our reference to Tirukkural, that the vowel 'A' அ in relation to other vowels and consonants brings out the sense of its unique potency, and as Professor K.Sivaraman puts it, "It is foundational and fundamental". The other letters articulate only in dependence on 'A' அ . The analogy of the visual sense (eye) in relation to the illumining Sun, where sunlight is the ground of the possibility of vision and is different from the visual sense, also denotes the absolute transcendence of the Lord, even as the first Vowel அ 'A', or the Sunlight is in relation to the eye sight or the depending consonant letters. Hence Parasivam is the ground of the existence of the anma (Pasu) and the world of matter - Pasam.

St.Umapathi Sivam defines in ten terse couplets the nature of Grace Divine. We shall consider some select gems that elucidate his interpretation of the Eye of Grace.

"Like the action of the effulgent Sun upon this earth,
Arul is the luminous light that illumines
everywhere, everything

It causes souls to perform 'Deeds' (Karma)
And to enjoy the fruits of such 'Deeds'."

- T.A.P. IV 32

There are deeds of accumulation, called 'Sanchitam'. There are deeds ripe for fruition in the present birth, called 'Pirarabtam'. There are also deeds now accumulating within Man's consciousness, called 'Agamiyam'. Grace brings about the increase and the consumption (enjoying pain and pleasure) as a result of deeds - 'Peruka Nuhara Vinai' is a significant context. Siva's Grace through the operation of His Sakti or Divine Energy affords the light of understanding, by which men, by nature dormant, arise from their inactivity and perform the actions of life. If Siva's Grace realising their impotent state does not impart to them knowledge of itself, where else can they imbibe the saving knowledge?

- T.A.P. V.33

We next proceed to scan the expression of Grace, having deciphered its nature. What is the manifestation of Grace? The form of Grace is manifested in the Guru. His culminating role is a unique feature of Saivism.

"Who can know unless the gracious All-knowing
One
Appears as the Guru and reveals the Truth
sublime?"

- T.A.P. V.49

"Can the pure-Sun-stone (crystal) kindle fire
without the Sun?
Can mystic knowledge be realised without the
light of His Grace".

- T.A.P. V.50

Thus Umapathy Sivacariyar speaks of Grace in the Form of the Divine Teacher, Sat Guru, who is mystic knowledge made

manifest. "The Forms of Grace are many, but the essence of Grace is one".

The author of Tiruvardupayan stipulates that the man of the world should not linger in the sea of bewilderment and indulge in the ensnaring sensual pleasures of the world. In the Socratean style, he warns man to seek the hidden fruit of Grace from within and, having found it, to possess it alone and relish it. The great lover of Siva-Sakti - Uma Pathi by name, laments that the men of the world do not see the Sun of Grace, who lights their way throughout, nor do they turn to look at His Light to show the Way. The liberating Grace bestows its full beneficence only on those who seek It. Therefore there is a clear need for the observance of spiritual practices, as chanting the Holy Name of Siva, and ceremonial worship in conformity to the prescribed codes of Sariya, Kriya, and Yoga disciplines in order to merit Divine Grace.

The author of this Poem on the Fruits of Divine Grace urges the earnest seekers to keep in constant contact with the light of Grace, in order that they become worthy recipients of potent insights. Siva's Omni-presence will not be felt by enfeebled souls, who do not habituate themselves with the lens of grace, even though it is in their possession.

- T.A.P. V.40-41

He further elucidates the four fundamental facets which govern the life of man. There is the essential being or the doer, Ceivaan, to whom deeds are attributed. There is the twofold deed, Ceivinai that man is called upon to perform ceaselessly. There follows the painful and pleasurable effects of embodiment which are termed their fruits, Cerpayan. Finally there towers Siva the Omniscient, who decrees these deeds at the ordained time to the doer, that he may

experience their effects, Cerpavan. It is because man has not been awakened to realise these four axiomatic truths that he is subjected to endless bewilderment and ignorance.

- T.A.P. V.53

Tiruvardupayan advocates that every effort should be made to diminish the confusion of unworthy deeds, so that man does not dissipate his energy by indulging in the fruits of ignoble karmic activity. He should disentangle himself from the binding force of deeds and acquire equanimity, so that the benign Eye of Grace illumines his path, and leads him to find beatitude. Divine Grace symbolised in the Third Eye of Siva fulfils the soul's highest aspirations, and is therefore the most valuable treasure for mankind.

"There is nothing more majestic than Divine Grace
in this Universe."

Arulit periyathu ahilathil illai".

- T.A.P. V.31

The Winkless Eye in the Saiva Agamas

Agamas are a body of sacred writings, handed down and associated with the worship of God in images. In Tirumanthiram (1429) is a reference to the Agamas stemming from the nine manifestations of Rudra Siva and are divided into Karma Kaandam (rites) Upasana (worship and service) and Jnana (knowledge) kaandams.

Agamas expound on the characteristics of the Tattvas or principles governing the universal life, and mantras which afford protection to the people, and came to be known as Tantras. In the Saiva Agamas, God is substantiated as Siva; the five elements, the

Sun and the moon marking time and the soul constitute the form of Siva. Sivalingam represents the formless-form of Siva, in whom the whole animate and inanimate universe remains concealed and from whom it emanates.

In the Jnanapada section, the Agamas acclaim God in the Svarupa (real) and Tatastha (assumed) aspects. In His svarupa, nitya state, He permeates the Universe with His inherent illuminating Energy (Sakti). His face emits illumination of knowledge and sparks, from His triple Eyes, fill the entire universe. The entire universe is His power or energy. Siva and Sakti are united in the Third Eye as fire and heat. In Self lumination, Siva is like the sun; when Siva becomes related with the soul, He is Sakti. By His Sakti Siva endows the souls, who are under the grip of bondage of Pasam with the liberating grace by means of the five-fold activities.

In the Saiva Agamas, the idea of Grace finds a distinct line of thought. It is interpreted as 'a divine creative movement' for supplying all souls with fields of experiences, in which they may enjoy pleasures and suffer pain. The Grace of God works in conformity with the Cosmic Laws and decrees. The world is revealed to every person in just the manner in which he ought to experience it.

Therefore divine Grace is not a work of favour or compassion conferred on man. It is a movement in favour of our getting the right desires in accordance with our karma. Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta explains in his book, 'The Southern Schools of Saivism: (A History of Indian Philosophy, Volume 5)' the working of this potent power of Grace. "Creative action of the world takes place in consonance with our good and bad deeds, in accordance with which the various types of experience unfold themselves to us".

"In this sense, Grace acts according to the permanent Will of God, operating in the orderliness of the evolutionary creation, for the protection of the world, and supplying it as the basis of human existence in accordance with individual karmas."

We should take note that Grace in the Saiva terminology does not connote either mediation or intercession. This is clear from the designation of Grace as Sakti, the universal manifestation of the power of Siva, typified in the cosmic Dance of Siva Natarajah and the Mukkannan - Triple Eyed-Siva. The philosophical views found in the Saivagamas are expressed in the sections called "Vidya-pada" or Jnana Kandam. Kamikagama is the oldest and the Mrgendra Agama forms an appendage to it. Here the movement of the heart in faith is regarded as a concrete form of worship. Devotion to Siva came to be regarded as the criterion of faith and superceded Vedic rituals.

Siva is omniscient and is regarded as the Efficient Cause, while Sakti, in other words His Grace, is known to be the Instrumental Cause of all things. Consciousness is of the nature of intuitive knowledge and spontaneous action. This consciousness abides in the Soul, and the Agamas dwell at length on the categories of Sariya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana for the application of this consciousness.

The pursuit of a jnani or a man of knowledge is to lift himself out of his ignorance, to awaken in him a higher consciousness of mind, which will lead him to discover, know and realise and participate in the inner harmonies of the mighty forces governing his life-activity, so as to attain progressively inner fulfilment to himself - paramasugam or anandam. Yoga according to the Tantras is a form of developing inner discipline. The path of Kriya brings

about total emancipation, by conforming not only to inner discipline but also to the observance of external disciplines. In his relationship to the world, man should strike a balance between the cultivation of spirituality and its external projection. Community worship at home and in temples are necessary steps to forge ahead the ideal of one world of humanity, and one God who resides in his and in the heart of his fellow beings. Sarya deals with the details of worship and codes of conduct which an aspirant should follow. A wealth of symbolism is embodied in the rituals of worship. Man obtains a stronger psychic force by the observance of the rules and performance of rituals laid down in the Agamas.

In this way a Saivite should concentrate and analyse himself and his mental faculties. Then he would discover his limitations, mental and moral and grow in self awareness and with it develop an extra sensory perception which brings about self-revelation that leads to Self Realisation. In the ethereal luminosity are created vibrations in man which brings about in him extra sensory perception, by which he is freed from 'malas' or impurities and he is uplifted by the illuminating energy of Siva.

The Agamas affirm that ultimate Reality is immanent, operating both as the material world and in the material world. The main focus is on the Will of Siva operating within the world, as an inward, interior phenomenon. The pathways of 'Sariya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana' features, often afford a clue to the effort of the adherents of the Saiva tradition to hold together in both thought and worship, the different aspects of the Divine Nature. Hence the emphasis of the Saiva Canonical Texts on worship and rituals to intensify the worshipper's awe and adoration. This view of Ultimate Reality has continued through the centuries as an effulgent Presence in the life of the Saivites.

The Saiva Agamas articulated Ultimate Reality as both transcendental and immanent, masculine and feminine and within the ambit of Time and Eternity. Time and space have their emotional connotations. They attest at every crucial moment, the polarity between transcendent, undifferentiated consciousness, and the active power immanent in a universe of infinite relationships and constant activity. Thus the Agamas followed by the Tirumurais affirm the power of radiant Grace to endow the souls with the apperception of the luminous Siva.

Thus proclaim the Agamas according to 'Nishdanubhuthi'. "If uninterrupted "Nishtai" is performed, eternal release will be attained. "Nishtai" is when thinking is subdued; it is union with Siva's Effulgence. Having worshipped the majestic Guru, both eyes fixed on the Trinetra, remain in a state of mona (silence) without deviating, like a painted flame without flickering; the sadaka breaks thus the mind's wandering, knowledge and ignorance perfectly subsiding and gazing at the winkless Eye of Grace without winking, he attains flawless deliverance, O Lady. Thus proclaim all the Lord's Agamas".

"Having attained that excellent beatitude in which the self is submerged in the self-Luminous Self, those who remain steadfastly without straying from the union even for a split second, will attain deliverance on earth without birth without death".

- Nishdanubhuthi: 15-24

Chapter 11

THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF SIVA

The perpetual Presence of the Divine Power is an established truth of Saivism. Its manifestation in varying degrees of potency in some of the Saiva classics has been reviewed by us. Saiva Siddhantam mediates through the communication of the Tirumurai Seers and the philosophers and preceptors, the essence of the Indwelling, Inseparable Power of Siva in the microcosm and macrocosm, as well as its application, utilisation and experience of it in an infinite variety of ways with a clarity, lucidity and veracity unknown in any other system of Philosophy.

"How I long to see your half opened Eye and be enticed by the benign smile on your face", is the prayer of the heart of the Saiva Nayanmar that resounds throughout Saiva Terrain. It is a yearning for a renewal of life with Ammai-Appan, the divine Father-Mother. The malady of the twentieth century is the super-display of the inherent 'anavam' (arrogance of egoity) among the human family all over the world. It must be eradicated before man annihilates himself. The sense of ownership, self assertion and sensuality should be replaced by growing self awareness leading to the awareness of Siva within. In obedience to His Will lies the Saiva Pathway. St. Tayumanavar intones:

**So sweet is the shade of the Lord, our Father's Feet
of Grace".**

Tirumurai V.90.1

To conform to His Will is to link up with a powerful flow of love that transcends the singer in a moment of great crisis. Here we see Apparswami in close communion with the ocean of energy that scintillates from Siva's Eye, and under the shade of His Feet, he takes the pledge of surrender. To bide by God's Will is to live in sweet content and perfect happiness as testified in Tayumanavar's canticle, and St. Appar's Devaram.

In this state of awareness, one's consciousness is reduced to its central point, in non-dual experience at the very centre of one's being, where the anma meets the Prime Mover who endows him with sight- foresight and insight. We shall turn to St. Meikanda Deva's Sivagnana Botham aphorism XI. This key sutra expounds on the metaphysical implication of the Seeing Eye and brings to the fore, the inter-relatedness of the Anma with the power of the Grace of Siva. This is one of the fundamental and most illuminating insight, a salient tenet of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. Here is the key sutra XI of Sivagnana Botham.

The Illuminer beneath the Eyes

**"It is the Anma within that directs the Seeing
eye to See.**

**So too, this unseen Anma is made to see by the
Lord within**

**In unsullied and in ever-remembering love, the
Anma movestowards the Feet of Haran".**

Sutra XI explains the power of the Seeing Eye of Siva :

The anma within, in union with the eye causes it to see, the nature of the eye being to see, when it is caused to see, and the anma itself sees. Similarly, God in union with the Anma causes it to know. Omniscient God knows everything. By love and devotion, Man keeps up the remembrance of God and therefore is in union with God. The man of God attains the experience of divine grace, the sacred Feet of the luminous Triple-Eyed Siva.

The eye cannot see an object, unless an illuminating light uniting with the light of the eye falls also upon the object. Similarly, the Anma whose nature it is to know when helped to know, cannot know unless God's knowledge unites with it and passing with it to the object, unites with it also. Alone, man's inner self cannot perceive or know anything.

"En manathan kannin ahathan" - "Indweller
beneath my eyes,

Let the Seeing Eye illumine my being".

- Tiruvacagam 34.4

Such is the plenary experience of the Anma. It is the Lord in union, who makes the Anma see steadfastly at Him, in uninterrupted love. When the Anma becomes one with God, it experiences His Grace. That is, the Anma experiences the bliss and love in communion with Siva.

A New Approach is within our reach. Let us try to understand and endeavour to obtain a clear insight. "He sees me and is seen by me".

New Horizons of Illumination :

We shall now proceed to penetrate the expansive horizons of the Anma's illumination brought about by the inseparable union with Siva. This is termed Moksha - freedom from Pasam which comprises all good and evil, the unoriginated as well as the consequential. The 'Malas' that had been kept in check hitherto, have been overcome and the freed self attains 'Sivanubhava' - Siva-Experience. This is the recovery of the self - Siva-labha. "Seek and you shall find".

Siva Jnana Botham reveals the spiritual unfoldment of the Anma through three well marked stages. In the Siva-Rupa stage, the gross manifestation of Pasam in the form of tattvas ceases to obtrude. The Anma gains freedom from the not-self. In the Siva-Darsana stage, there is freedom from the root source of 'me and mine' by self-effacement, and this leads to the freedom of Siva-Yoga. Conscious union with Siva is Siva-Yoga. Siva remains unknown to one who seeks him in terms of 'I' (the seeker) and the 'Thou' (sought) as He is unknown to the one who seeks Him in one's 'I'. St. Appar has known Him in Being, as "the Lamp of his discriminating consciousness". V.93

He intones; "I have known my Lord, who
knows me,
Therefore how shall I ever forget Him?"

It is of immense significance to understand fully the analogy of the "Seeing Eye" which works out the unique manner in which the Lord is "knowable", and enters into the indissoluble relationship with the Anma. We have earlier explained the working of the "physical eye" and now we shall proceed to understand the import

of St. Appar's intuitive insight of union with Siva in Being and Will:
St. Appar queries,

'Oh my eyes, Have you seen Him?' and he gives a
convincing answer to his own question'

"After an arduous search, I have seen Him,
who cannot be seen outside but within me.

He is seeing me and is seen by me".

This is Siva-Bhoga. The Saiva Sastras unfold the science of the Saiva Nayanmar's unitive experience which is like the inward unity of consciousness with the function of "Seeing" or sight; whereas the non-dual relation between the Chit-Sakti and the self is like the indissoluble union of light with sight. Hence its great significance in the living testament of the power of Divine Grace.

In the summit of His overpowering, self-effacing surrender in the canto on 'Tearful Ecstasy' (34) Manicavasagar addresses the Lord as "My Eye of Delight"! and "My Lord with the Triple Eye". "Mukkan Emmane". The sense of vision is the eye. The sense of 'eye' is composed of visual light and reaches out to the objects in close association with the outer elemental light. The two species of light cannot be differentiated in their respective work of "Seeing and Illumining". These two kinds of light inter-penetrates and commingle in a unique way, so as to produce the sensation of vision. The luminous emanation from the eye becomes so subtly attuned to the elemental light, that it is difficult to determine its own nature, other than that of the outer light it has merged in, the light that illumines the objects to it (the eye).

While it is true that outer light which thereby illumines remains unaffected by the fact of the visual light commingling with it, the difference of light from the visual sense is indicative of the intrinsic

transcendence of God in relation to the self. Sutra XI of Sivajnana Botham makes it quite clear that the conception of the Phenomena of vision in terms of the visual light is delusion, as only its seeing aspect is perceived, but not its revealing aspect. Thus the optical vision cannot take place without the illumination by the outer light.

This explains lucidly the first perspective of Siva-Yoga which implies a union of the perceiving object. The self in union with God becomes one with Him in 'being', and abides steadfastly in His service. The second perspective of Siva-Yoga consists in the self submitting to the Will of God, which implies sublimation of one's will. Here the self is in integral union with God, as one with His Being, and tuned in perfect harmony to His will, so that its will is neither active nor non-active.

The anma works at the level of man's faculties and senses, and gains by the many accents of spiritual practices, higher powers of perception and awareness till at last, it makes contact with the mid-point, the centre of man's being, when he has overcome his inherent egoity and limitations and participates fully in the 'paranjyothi' - Effulgence of Siva. Here Siva is experienced as Ontraai - in one's coincidence with one's self beyond all movements of the mind, in the self's indivisible centre. It is the experience of the silence of the transcendent Sivam. The purified illumined eye of a bhakta, a man of God meets the direct gaze of the Triple-Eyed Siva. It is Summa-Iru - Be still, in harmony with will and Being of Siva.

When the eye intuitively light non-dually, it is illumined by submitting to light. There is pure apprehension. Like the self underlying its sight, the knower-Siva underlying knowledge, is constitutive of the experience of knowing. Siva-Jnana or immediate Self Aware-

ness of Siva as content, the third Eye of Siva, involves the exercise of the functions of Iccha (love) and Kriya (action) by the self. This is the switch that lights the Saiva Pathway. Whatever needs to be done must indeed be done with love and efficiency. It is the exercise of Kriya and Iccha - action impelled by love.

The self is not only pure awareness - Jnana, but also pure love (Iccha) and activity (kriya). This is Siva-bhoga, where the self's awareness of Siva as the subject implies continuous memory - Jnana. There is also the self's utter dedication and submission to Siva, who is the transcendent "I" in the self, and this is the exercise of Kriya. Then follows an ecstatic love for the Indweller within, welling up in surges of devotion and purified Awareness as in Tiruvacagam and Thevaram canticles, where the 'energy' of Iccha, Jnana and Kriya commingle in unison.

His Mid-Most Eye Illumines :

Siva is the outer light which reveals vision to the "eye" of the self, and also the Inner light, which pervades the visual content with the vision of the Self. This is the finest experience of Siva-Bhoga, Siva's primordial "oneness with self" - the self having its 'being' under the refuge of His Divine Feet, illumined by His luminous Eye.

Every Saivite knows the 'hridaya-mantra' of Invocation to the gracious Feet of Siva, in the opening verses of Manicavasagar's Sivapuranam, which are chanted daily by the saivites, at the going down of the Sun and at Sun rise.

"Hail Holy Feet of Him
who quits not my heart for a split second,
Praise be to the radiant, roseate Feet of Siva,

May He be our Solace ".....

"Kindled by soulful joy, the psalm of Siva I sing,
That my dubious deeds of former births are null
and void.

His mid-most eye illumining,
He came down, He who transcends thought,
And turned His benign grace on me".

This is the testimony of one who has experienced the peace of Sivam, which in metaphysical language is the realisation of Siva-Bhoga. St. Sundarar, the Saiva-Saint of the eighth century laments at his imprisonment in the body:

"I roamed, a cur for many days -
Without a single thought of Thee
Roamed and grew weary, then such Grace
As none could win Thou gavest me.
In Vennēy-Nallur Thy Shrine of Grace
Where bamboos fringe the Pennai,
O My shepherd! I became all Thine:
How could I now myself forswear".

- VII Tirumurai: 1.2

Man is given to remembering, combining, interpreting, comparing and recording events in his daily life, that he has no thought of the God who is directing all these events. By slow degree, His Grace gently begins to operate openly in his life. Then his search for what is Real becomes a genuine quest in his life. This partition between the processes of thought and Reality is what Siddhantam views as a consequence of the action and inter-action of the triple bonds - Anavam, Karma and Maya. It is imperative that man breaks this partition of thought and Reality by constant remembrance and

uniting one's self with the Indwelling Self. That is the great experience of Siva-Bhoga.

Man can never break through this partition if he is encumbered with innate impurity. A more elevating power is needed, and that is the function of Grace, the power (Sakthi) of Siva. "May Thy Grace illumine my perception", is the humble prayer of every Saivite. This is an acceptance of a transmission of the essence via the thought processes, which would then stand for the highest form of consciousness. The conscious consummation of mind, intellect, reason and reflection can only be effected by a force outside their domain, and it is this contact with the efficient Immanence of Siva through His inherent Power, that is of cardinal significance in the religious perspective of the Saivites.

Thy Will be Done:

The divine and mystic wisdom imparted in the shape of Grace dissolves the darkness of the Anavam (egoity) and shows the way to deliverance, and hence is of paramount importance to the Saiva Way of life. The Scriptures exclaim with one accord that there is nothing greater than the impact of divine Grace on man.

St. Umapathi in 'The fruit of Divine Grace' expounds in chapter IV on the dignity of Grace. Grace radiates light everywhere like the sun's great light. There are deeds (Karma) of accumulation (San-citam); 'There are also deeds ripe for fruition in the present birth (pirarabtam): There are 'deeds now accumulating within man's consciousness' (agamiyam). Grace sheds light everywhere for the performance of new deeds, and for the consumption of the fruits of former deeds. It is the source of all action. It needs to take cognisance of the material elements of the phenomenal universe and of the souls who have no knowledge of their own, and imparts to

them mystic knowledge. It needs to know, that it may make known. The souls know not the Grace which is their life and illumination. They do not discern that they possess this divine guiding wisdom, as they are ignorant of their own being, and do not see the light of the Lord in their inner being.

Every Saivite needs to know that he lives and acts under the guidance of the Supreme Lord's Grace.

"Ponder not: Think of nothing: See not yourself in
the fore-ground.

What you behold, let it be That".

- Tiruvarudpayan, VIII

St. Umapathi Sivachariar, the Author of this wonderful Text on the 'Fruit of Divine Grace' further explains the steps to God-realization. "Do not think of anything in its concreteness; nor should you seek to interpret the symbols as you decipher material objects. Do not put yourself forward as one who sees. Regard steadily the loving wisdom that sees you. Enter within It and lie hidden there. What you cannot see, do not strive to see. In whatever way Grace absorbs you, wholly yield yourself, and in purity become commingled with grace, and repose under its refreshing shade. In this way, you enjoy supreme felicity which is the gift of Grace".

It is Will, the gracious Sakti of Siva, that penetrates into that phenomenon called consciousness in its fundamental reality. The co-present God is always a co-present; God's unequivocal oneness and all-inclusiveness is the pre-supposition of his non-duality. "Thou art not aught in the universe, yet naught is there save Thee". What is affirmed is their INSEPARABILITY, a positive condition of Co-presence.

No amount of theorising can bring to light the Truth of these experiences, unless and until they are revealed. That is the reason perhaps why Meikanda Sastras and Treatises on the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam, valuable as they are cannot supplant the revelatory and direct experiences of Reality communicated by the Thevaram Seers. They speak in mysterious yet convincing language of the knowledge of the spirit as integral intuition of the truth of existence at its source. Such wisdom shows us the way to attain the freedom of the self.

The Converging Point

The goal of human existence is to comprehend and apprehend the Oneness of things in eternal spirit. This is brought out lucidly in the Miracle-Ode of Tiruvacagam by St. Manicavasagar. It unfolds the great mystery of the inter-relatedness of the subtle workings of the Ānma with that of the Divine Will, the gracious Power of Siva. By their intuition, these Seers of wisdom realized the capricious frailties of man and his intimate relationship to the supreme one behind all. In their great compassion, they urge the struggling humanity to establish a living contact with ParaSiva and attain lasting happiness. In their inspired Hymns of praise, they show us the gateway to the experience of the unitive life of grace in Sivam.

St. Manicavasagar senses a peace which man did not make, and cannot mar. He sings;

"My past bonds dissolved, present perplexities
effaced

And future ills no longer there, Lo, the Lord of life,

He has drawn me to Him. In chastened awareness
I revolve in the benign Presence of my Lord of Thil-
lai".

- Tiruvacagam 40.3

Browning in Paracelsus echoes a similar exultation to the
supremacy of the Power of God.

"I know I felt (perception unexpressed)
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought
What God is, what we are,
What life is. How God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways - One everlasting bliss
All power proceeds from whom all being
emanates".

Siva-Awareness is the goal of life. Those who have crossed the
threshold and proceeded towards that which lies beyond thought,
have held before us a number of solutions to follow their pathway.
Enlightenment, Wisdom, Love, Service, Worship are some of the
practices accentuated to combat the stupendous limitations of our
inherent impurity. Purity is the pass-word at the threshold to Siva-
Realisation. His flaming Eye shall consume all impurities and
lighten the dark chambers of the heart.

A new stimulus is needed, a new attitude and a new intuitive
insight to embark on this uncharted journey - Man's discovery of
his true being, of his ever growing humility, of the balance of deeds
good and bad - of the delusive potency of the changing world and
its own innate impurity. An intense yearning is the next step. Energy
becomes concentrated and in the light of awareness, man grows
humbler and more confident with an ever expanding reverence for
the Omnipotence behind all creation.

There comes about a transformation, and the seeker begins to understand better the inner spiritual laws. Spiritual knowledge is a series of experiences distinguished by the stage of knowing. These stages are linked to the stages of perception in empirical life. We have outlined how perception leads to immediate knowledge and to intelligible discrimination, and the transmutation from the state of watching things to seeing through things. Man's third eye no longer dormant gets illumined by the light of Siva's Triple Eye.

In spiritual knowledge, there is a transition from the gross to the subtle, from the known to the dimension of realization or experience. The stages are gross perception, specific awareness, and true perception. We move from error to doubt, and thence to truth. St. Manicavasagar's 'Tiruvandap-Pahuti' in Tiruvacagam traces the first stages in the journey of spiritual knowledge to know God as indwelling in the self; as self within the self and the self as microcosm comprehending within itself the entire cosmos. It is looking within. It is direct perception.

"The hiding player - There I have seen you"

- Tiruvacagam 1.141

In the Canto of 'Tirucadagam', St. Manicavasagar elucidates the next stage as that of Spiritual Awakening, where the subject surrenders to the object. Here the centre shifts to the transcendent factor of God from involving difference to non-difference. Thus from the 'form and name' stage to the 'darsana' stage, which is insight self-critical and self-subordinated, the truth-seer moves to the crucial phase of integral knowledge which is the culmination of knowledge, leading to the vision of Being, identical with all, and yet transcending all.

That in a nutshell is the grandeur of the seeing Eye of Siva. From habitual looking down at His Feet of Grace (Kriya-Activity), we now are drawn to look up to His Resplendent Eye and See the mingling of His Will or Sankalpa (Ichhai Power) with the power of Jnanam or illumination.

"I've seen It. Do Thou too See It
The glory of Grace - I have seen".

In his 'Ditty on Recollection' the author of Tiruvacagam recalls the untarnished glory of the Triple-Eyed Siva, and chanting His Name, he sips the nectar of His Grace in the fullness of realisation.

"Did I perform any worthy acts of worship?
Did I merit initiation of 'Sivayanama'?
Like honey, nectar sweet, my blessed Lord Siva,
Of His own accord came and entered my Soul,
He bequeathed His immeasurable legacy of Grace,
This bodily existence, from that day, I truly discern.
- Tiruvacagam 38.10

Chapter 12

SIVAGNI - RE-DISCOVERY OF THE INNER LIGHT

The finite man yearns to find the Basis of permanence in order to overcome the allurements of the transient world. The Divine GAZE assures the certitude of divine Grace and endows the man of Sraddha (faith) with the insight into a fourth dimension of heightened consciousness to see the unique truth of his 'being', and taste the joy that is within him and also everywhere. St. Appar confirms that the Luminous Sivam is the fountain head of all the existence, knowledge and joy of the world: "Ella ulagamum aanai neeye". Love of truth and the truth of love can break all barriers and confront the dark crevices of the whole range of our mental perceptions and embrace all as well as heal all errors. The more one progresses in the "Oli-Neri", or the Path of illumination, the more is one linked to the cosmic harmony and cosmic bliss. "TO BE all that is, is to have the joy of all that is". There is nothing outside the luminous Sivam.

Let us delve into the unexplored dimension of the ancient shrine known as "Vidanka Sthalam", meaning "illuminated, flower decked image", whose abode is Tiruvarur. The magnificent splendour of Siva as Somaskanda Thiagarajah has been extolled in many myths and puranas. It signifies the mediation of devas and man to reunite the refulgence of the transcendent and the immanent Siva

and Sakti, the light of all lights, radiant and supreme with the divine Energy, the timeless in the temporal and the infinite in the finite.

Our Ancient Seers of Truth have stated that the ultimate Truth can only be experienced and be the object of our worship, when it is united with Divine Energy with the attributes of Sat - Existence, Chit - consciousness, knowledge and Anandam - Bliss. The aim of (Sadhana) spiritual practice is to know this Supreme Power and to observe its uninterrupted work within our body. Since Parama-Sivam is Omnipresent, our principal sadhana is to see His Radiance everywhere, to realise His Effulgence everywhere, to worship and serve Him as Father-Mother and Son, that is as Sri Somaskanda Murti, within and without. This Supreme Being is the manifest Form of the Formless. Truth that is Ultimate which is beyond the purview of mind and speech, contrived to enter our comprehension in the form of Veethi Vidankan, Sri Somaskanda Murti.

The Anma (psyche) is eternal. At the dawn of creation the anma is aroused from the dormant state of inactivity by the impetus of the primordial Energy. The individual body and the Universe as individuality and totality are within the sway of the thirty six constituents or tattvas and enact the play of life and death through the process of evolution, subjected to the cosmic laws and undergoing the purification of one's own self. Although bound by the physical, subtle and causal bodies and restricted by the illusion of the bonds of egoity, action in the dual fields of existence and delusion of contrary forces of truth and falsehood, a spark of the Supreme Being is always present in the core of one's being in seed form. The presence of this spark of Sat-chit-Anand enables the anma to realise the Supreme Being externally and internally. By his own sadhana and by the Grace of the Divine Energy, man fulfils the purpose of his life by gaining awareness into the universal

manifestation of the Supreme Being, within and without. The revaluation of the blissful and effulgent form of the Supreme Being within the core of one's heart is internal realisation and which can be realised when the seeker is in a state of yogic union with Paramasivam.

Divine Will and Power as life-force, love-force and knowledge-force are embodied in the Hindu-Saiva concept of Sakti. Consciousness is power and at the very heart of matter. It releases a subtle heat by the discipline of yoga, tapas, bhakti and yajna and is the basis of all transmutations. It is the spiritual fire (agni) in matter, that acts as the pivot that sets in motion, the physical and psychic changes of the macro-microcosmos. Thus by the opening of the third Eye, matter is awakened to the consciousness of its power which operates the many transmutations. The Triple Eyed Siva embodies a luminous Totality that unites complete immobility and the dynamic movements.

St. Manicavasagar sings in Tiruvempavai on the splendour of Tiruvannamalai. It is the Hill of radiant Resplendence - "Arum Perum Jyothi" - the Hill which materialised from the pillar of light, that eluded the comprehension of Brahma and Vishnu. It is at Mount Arunachala that Sakti regained her immobility, after doing great "tapas" and Siva took her in inseparable union, on his left side, according to Puranic sources. At the summit of the union of the positive (He) and the negative (She) forces is the effulgent Being, symbolised as the Jyothi (Light) Hill of Arunachala, where the rays of the sun are gathered in its centre. Light and shadow at Arunachala exist side by side and in relation to each other. This All-view is what is seen - the transcendent and immanent, and extolled by Bhagawan Sri Ramana as Arunachala Siva.

When eager aspirants who flock to Tiruvannamalai and circum-ambulate the eight-mile base of Mount Arunachala, they intuit the dynamism of Sakti as being rocked to sleep in the Being and the Being in Sakti asleep in pure Being. Here the Infinite is contained in the finite. In Arunachala, Sakti (Grace) reposes in the embrace of Siva and is hidden in the omniscience and omnipotence of the Infinite ParaSivam. Ramalinga Swamigal in his celebrated "Tiru-Arudpa" has sung on the glory of the refulgent Light of Grace (Sakti) illuminating rays of love and benignity. "Arud Perum Jyothi - Thani Perum Karunai".

The third Eye of Siva (Agni) is the force that posits the relationship between the two polarities and reveals patently on the "Deepam" festival at Arunachala in the month of November, the ascendancy of the bright constellation of the "Karttigai" (Pleiades). The latent power of Sakti-in-Siva - Arthanareeswara is unfolded on this holy day of light, when Mount Arunachala is aglow with Siva's radiance. Saivites believe that fundamental Agni symbolised in the third Eye is in search of Forms, capable of manifesting Him and great Sages and Seers down the ages by intense 'tapas' have rediscovered the manifold immanence of Sivam and immersed themselves in bliss ineffable. Sang Sri Ramana Maharishi:

"The Formless and Imperishable Being stands revealed as my Annamalai Hill. It is the embodied Presence of the Three-Eyed God. The Virupaksha cave is the heart cave of that God and the devotees who dwell therein are sustained by Him. So truly we may consider the cave as their Mother".

It is the Fire within which must finally be recaptured. This is the flame of life which is the manifest Immanence of Parasivam and

which ignites the world of matter as well. The flame is enfeebled by man narrowing his vision of Reality, by his separate ego seeking the false vision of externality. That is why it is so very indispensable that every one should rediscover one's own true self and lay bare his veiled consciousness. Our Hindu Savants have left behind lasting records of their experiences of luminous wholeness. It is pure joy of attainment, Sakti-in-Sivam, within One's own true self, that can ensure the continued joy of life and spiritual fulfilment. The inner meaning of a concept or principle cannot be understood unless it has been seen as accomplished in the life of great Seers and there-after evolved in one's own life by adequate sadhana. To see God everywhere, to realise Him everywhere and to serve Him everywhere should be considered the principal sadhana and effective form of worship.

The Seers realised that by proper spiritual practice, powers of distant, subtle and divine vision could be acquired. They also discovered that all the elements and principles present in the universe were also present in every atom of the universe. The realisation of the universal Supreme Spirit lead them on to acquire direct knowledge of the body-elements and all the inner faculties. As a result of their divine sight, they came to know that the quintessence of the body was in the chakras (nerve centres) along the spinal column and in the cerebrum. All else was only auxiliary to the real substance. They saw with the divine vision that the key to a harmonious life lay in the path of the Sushumna. It is a channel of vital energy along the backbone and said to be the main cord of the sympathetic nervous system. It is the main ladder leading to Sahasrar (cerebrum), the principal resort of Truth-seekers.

The Luminous Light of Tiruvarur

The Temple at Tiruvarur unfolds the secret that one's consciousness remains the central lever. The change of consciousness is the chief factor in the inner life of every man. The Image of Sri Somaskanda-Thiagarajah at Tiruvarur represents peace and energy and attests that by will power and yogic sadhana, one can manipulate the current of consciousness in the inner Chakras or centres of consciousness which irradiate energies, whereby one can channel his activities suitably, as in the case of Tirujnanasambandar's miracle at the Fire Contest in Madurai before the Pandyan King.

Tiruvarur Thiagarajah is the living symbol of the certitude of the immanence of Sivam in all the manifestation of the world of matter, intellect and spirit. The inner realisation should take precedence over outer realisation, where manipulation of nature has made man by self multiplication, a slave of the means to enjoy life. The Sapta Vidankan's ajaṇa movement denotes the power of consciousness, that is fundamental Agni at work within each being and constituting the inner reality of the phenomenal world.

Respiration is the function of prana which is the life-energy or life-breath. Its concentrated energy obeys the yogic will and effects wonderful transmutations. Our ancient Seers perceived by meditation that the solar heat is produced by nuclear fusion and the power of the solar energy formed the basis of all physical reality. They touched this core, the cause and deduced the effects. They dealt with the effects of transmutations, as they knew the initial energy behind all cosmic laws. Behind gravitation, there is the vayu (air) and behind the solar heat is the fundamental agni, which is the spiritual agni, the energy aspect of consciousness, which is the basis of all phenomena.

The mystery unfolded

The path of Sushumna is divided into six centres. At each centre, there is a circle or chakra. Within the path of Sushumna are laid the positions of the following: the three bodies, physical, subtle and causal; the five elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth; the five sheaths, annamaya (nutriment) pranamaya (life) manomaya (mind) vigjnanamaya (intelligence) and anandamaya (causal sheaths); the seven higher regions, bhuh, bhuvah, suvah, mahah, janah, tapah, satyam; and the seven stages of the Jnana (knowledge) path, virtuous inclination, thoughtful disposition, attenuation of mind, realisation of eternal existence, detachment from the world, truth perception and merging in God. By concentrating the mind at each of the inner chakras, all the truths laid therein are spontaneously revealed. In the centre of each of the chakras, all the truths laid therein are spontaneously revealed. In the centre of each chakra is seated God or His representative deity. At the topmost centre called Sahasraram (cerebrum) is enshrined the Supreme Being, in the abode of supreme bliss.

The movement of the current of vital energy in Sushumna produces a sound, naadam which comes out of bindu (centre) and on return merges into the bindu again. Bindu is the luminous point and the pace of stasis for the secker. The lower-most bindu is the centre of the triangular (coccyx) Muladharam and the uppermost bindu is the centre of the triangle at Sahasraram (cerebrum) and naadam unites the upper bindu with the lower bindu. The current of naadam flows upwards and downwards. In the upward current, there is manifestation of light; in the downward current, there is manifestation of the world. The bindu at Ajna Chakra (cerebellum) between the eyebrows, at the back of the forehead, is the main bindu. It is the meeting place of all the five lower chakras.

Divine Energy - unmanifest and manifest

When Divine Energy is unmanifest and invisible, that state is called Nirguna (without attributes) and when the course of Energy is toward manifestation and creation, that state is Saguna (with all attributes). In the divine Energy are perceived two kinds of motions - centrifugal, moving from centre outwards, and centripetal, moving towards the centre. The course of energy assumes a circular form on account of these two opposite forces. The circular form of energy constitute the different chakras. On account of the action of the opposite current, man's mind, which is also a form of energy, gets whirled in attractions of opposites, like aversion and desires and egoistic propensities. This outward course of mind is termed pravritti and the indrawn movement of the mind is known as Nivritti. When the outward operation of mind diminishes and inward pull arises, then spiritual life begins. From this point, commences our keen insight into the most natural form of God-Realisation, that the Self-luminous ParamaSivam may be realised by us internally.

Key to Inner Well-being

A current of human electricity moves constantly up and down from Sahasraram to Muladharam. An earnest seeker learns under his Guru's guidance to perceive this current and to be in tune with it, till his embodied being (psyche) passes from one chakra to the other till it reaches the Sahasraram, where it becomes merged in his real self in non-dual bliss. Thus it should be noted that within our body-machine exist all the centres of mind and prana (life-energy). Prana (life-energy) tends to go to the centre (chakra) where mind is concentrated and mind is lead to the centre where prana is directed. In this state of union of mind and prana, all the knowledge and the secrets of that particular centre (chakra) are revealed. The

relation of the chakra (nerve centre), mind and prana is a wonderful mystery and by a study of the working of different chakras and their presiding deities, we come to know, how Divine Energy works through our different centres.

Our Hindu Seers have left behind invaluable records of their investigations into the working of mind and life-energy and their mutual relationship as well as their intuitive discoveries into the great powers located at each of the Chakras. Life energy follows the mind and vice versa. By calming one, the other becomes composed and the path to God-realisation is made pleasant and natural. Though subtle in character, the positions of the Chakras in the body may be assumed to correspond to different nerve ganglions.

On the outer side of the spinal column, to the left is the Ida, moon-like, and to the right is the sun-like Pingala. In between these two is the Sushumna cord, which is of the mixed nature of Sun-Moon and Fire. The Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are channels of vital energy. Sushumna extends from Sahasraram to the Muladharam, the lowest point of the spinal column. This chakra partakes of the primary element, earth and the Sakti (power) of Kundalini is enclosed in three and a half circles. Above that at the base of the phallus is Svadishtanam or the pelvic plexus with water as the element and is the place of passions, where lust, anger, avarice, delusion, conceit and jealousy have their roots.

By meditation and self-control, the circumference of the revolving chakra gradually contracts and overcoming all the enemies, the seeker rises to the other chakras, Manipurakam-Solar Plexus, the abode of light, where the primary element is fire and on to Anahatam, cardiac plexus with air as the predominant element. This

chakra is said to be the dwelling place of Jivatma - individual soul. By concentrating at this centre, the seeker perceives the Lord and His Sakti directing and controlling the world and its beings. The mystic divine sound, anahata is heard at this spot. Above that, at the back of the neck, is Vishuddhi, cervical plexus, with ether as the primary element.

In between the eyebrows, at the back of the forehead is the ajna chakra - cerebellum. This is also known as the Kutastha, meaning immutable spot, being the Abode of Siva and Sakti where the play of duality aham (I) and Idam (visible world), seer and the seen, knower and known, is observed. It is here that the undivided Existence has manifested Himself into Siva and Sakti and is revolving around Himself, by means of union and separation. On the top of all is the 'Sahasraram' which is the Abode of Supreme Being.

The Splendour of Tiruvarur

Thus by spiritual Sadhana, by meditation, Japam and pranayamam, the penetration of the chakras is accomplished and the seeker gets established in Universal Existence. He then sees all beings as parts of the Eternal Existence. The Sapta Vidankan's ajaba movement denotes the power of consciousness; this fundamental agni is at work within each being and constitutes the inner reality of the phenomenal world. Let us revert to the Muladhara Shetram of Tiruvarur, which signifies the mysterious working of the spiritual agni in the human organism. Let us once again review the forms of Sivasthalas in the microcosm of the body. The six chakras beginning with the Muladharam are activated by the subtle chord of Sushumna and represent the five elements and the mind. The Ajna chakra reflects the mind tattvam. The Ida and Pingala symbolise the moon and the sun, so that in the microcosm of the

body, there are five elemental forces, mind, and the sun and moon, constituting the eight forms of Siva in the subtle form.

The Sutta Samhita cites Tiruvarur, Tiruvaiaru and Tiruvanaika Sivasthanams as the Causal manifestations of the Virat Purusha. It is the Samashti (aggregate) form of the Supreme creator of the manifested Universe. Thus Tiruvarur stands out as the Muladhara shetra in the manifested Universe. In the Muladharam, the Deity is Vatapi Ganapathi, praised as the Vinayaka who moves the Kudilai which is maya in its initial state. It is operated upon by the Sakti power which moves up and down the subtle nerve cord of Sushumna in the body. The Kudilai is the seat of the Kundalini Sakti which vibrates within the Muladhara Chakra, and penetrates into the Sushmna, the central nerve cord, and pervades the whole being.

The Ajaba Dance of Luminous Somaskanda

In the cosmic Universe, the Sakti as Kamalai in the nature of Chit-Jyoti Swarupam annihilated the asuras and saved the Gods. She united with Siva as Kamesvaran and rested on the golden mystic throne of Simhasanam. This is the Form which came to be distinguished as the Somaskanda or Thiagarajah Murti, and Tiruvarur came to be known as a Saktipeetam, Sripuram and Devaasiriyapuram. The Somaskanda Form embodies the three-in-one, that of Sivam, Sakti and Skanda in unison - Siva is Sat; Sakti is Chit; and Skanda is Anandam.

Siva is always resplendent and shining. The All-conscious soul is possessed of Sakti (power), but its power is sometimes active and sometimes dormant. When this power is dormant in the soul, it cannot be cognised. Therefore Omnipresent Siva who is always luminous remains invisible. Pure nescient power (dormant) in the Muladharam, is known as Kundalini and from its coiled state, it is

aroused by the active Intelligent Power (Chit Sakti) and is manifested in the form of naadam (sound) and jyoti (light). The real abode of the Chit-Sakti (Intelligent Power) is Sahasraram. But in the human body, She is lying in nescient state at the Muladharam. Forgetfulness of his true self by man is called the slumber of Kundalini.

The life energy enables us to realise God, but due to the resistance of the opposite current, man is bewildered by the force of samaskaras, desires, pride of doership and forgets his real self. His life-breath wanders in the paths of Ida and Pingala channels and there can be no peace till he is established in his true self and follows the path of the Sushumna nadi. By the grace of Sastras, Guru and his own discerning faculty, every seeker will be able to get into the upward current of Sushumna and his life-force penetrates one by one the six psychic centres; and guided by the auspicious life force or Prana Sakti, he gets into the Self luminous Abode of Sahasraram.

Thus the life-force termed Kundalini, through the inhaled and exhaled breath circulates and permeates the whole body through the Ida (lunar) and Pingala (solar) channels (the sensory and motor nerves). The introvert (afferent) state of the nerve current, when we breathe through the left nostril came to be known as Ida, the Chandranadi or the moon Channel. During the period of its action, our senses, mind and intellect are faced inwards and the mind becomes tuned to meditation, japam and worship.

The action of Pingala (sun channel) or Suryanadi induces one to breathe through the right nostril and makes the mind extrovert and inclined towards worldly activity. The current of Pingala is centrifugal and is termed an efferent nerve, while that of Ida is centripetal and called an afferent nerve.

Ordinarily when the breath goes from Ida to Pingala or vice-versa, it has to pass through Sushumna, but it takes very little time that it does not prove helpful in sadhana which really should aim at increasing the power of the life-breath to stay longer in Sushumna and have it under control. The upward movement of breath in Sushumna will be effected to the extent to which the action of Ida and Pingala will subside. When the life breath penetrates Sushumna and becomes fully absorbed therein, the sensations of the outer world subside and the Bliss of Sivam is revealed.

The process of rhythmic breathing that is the Ajapa movement (harmony of Ida and Pingala) effects the regaining of one's true nature; the entry of the life-force into Sushumna marks the surrender of the self and herein lies the aim of all spiritual practice Tiruvarur symbolises man's search to find the forgotten blissful self. The seeker finds his way to stay in the Mother's Lap. There is full realisation of God's Bliss here. His consciousness of being a separate entity vanishes, and he becomes merged in the Universal Supreme Consciousness.

Let us once again delve into further discoveries of the sanctified sages who discerned that the infinite Power of Siva was inwardly present not only in all beings, but also in the visible universe and that this latent power could be made patent in fulfilment of God's Will. This radiant Energy present in all being and matter in dormant state, by knowledge and spiritual practices can be aroused and made manifest. We shall however feebly, make an effort to understand the Unmanifest Supreme Siva with the help of His manifest Form at Tiruvarur - Thiagarajah - Somaskanda Form. It need hardly be stressed that the Unmanifest does not get limited by being manifest. Manifestation too may take various forms, being symbols of ideal

persons or ideal principles in the macrocosmic and microcosmic dimensions.

We had previously referred to Tiruvarur as the Muladhara shetra in the manifested Universe. In the microcosmos, the life-force termed Kundalini, through the inhaled and exhaled breath in the form of Hamsa circulates and permeates the whole body. Sa is the breath inhaled and ham is the breath exhaled and it makes up the ajapa mantra of Hamsa. This rhythmic breathing - So-Ham brings out the non-dual union of Siva and Sakti. This exercise of breathing in and breathing out by man takes place 21,600 times in twenty four hours and is the subtlest aspect of the origin of the Time factor, where the solar and lunar rays (heat-energy) exert their basic influence on Time.

The sun (divakaran) manifests day-time of twelve hours and the moon (nisakaran) manifests night-time of twelve hours which in turn make up the fifteen days (Paksham), when the moon orbits round the earth. So two such periods (paksham) constitute a month and twelve such months make up an year, which gives rise to seasons, degrees of sunshine, rainfall etc. Therefore in the process of evolution of existence on earth, Time plays an important factor and it originates in the movement of respiration of the breath (prana).

This is how the Energy-Nuclei revolves within and without

The source of light that illumine the macrocosm and the microcosm are the sun and moon and fire, which constitute the triple Eyes of Siva. The New Moon (amaavasya) is the time when the sun and the moon unite as one, rising together and setting together. Therefore on New Moon night, there is no moonlight. We

see this meeting of the sun and moon occurring in the level of the Universe (Adhibhutam). In the microcosmic level too, occurs the meeting of Ida (moon) and Pingala (Sun) in the Muladharam. On New Moon day, the prana (life-force) of Kundalini does not respire through the Ida or Pingala channels, neither does it pass through any one of the nasal apertures, but reposes in Muladharam. Since Tiruvarur is said to represent the Muladharam cakra which is based on the earth element and which has relevance to the ant-hill (earthy) manifestation of Siva as Vanmikanathan, the New Moon day is held in special reverence in Tiruvarur.

In the human body is situated to the right of the Muladharam Centre in the Pingala (surya nadi) canal, an egg-shaped substance called Saktipilam, which traces its upward way through the opening of the Sushumna (nerve canal) from Muladharam (near coccyx) to the head centre known as sahasrara or Brahmarandhram. It is termed Naadikantam (Energy-nuclei). In the gross plane, this energy-nuclei is embellished at Tiruvarur Temple in the sanctum called Hadakesvaram. There is a popular belief that those who worship here on the fourteenth (chaturtasi) night of the dark lunar half of March-April will attain unalloyed bliss.

Siva in His illumined Being supports Uma and Skanda in bliss and that form came to be known as Thiagarajah-Somaskanda Murti, worshipped primarily by Vishnu in the beginning. He placed this Image on his chest, as he rested on the thousand hooded serpent Adishesan in the Milk Ocean in Yogic stillness. His inhaling and exhaling breath (Sa-Ham) in rhythmic movement came to be known as the Ajaba dance and the Ajaba mantra of Hamsa-Soham originated as a voiceless, silent japa. In this way, the form of Siva as Somaskanda-Thiagarajah, heaving up and down on Vishnu's heart-centre, which is the Anahata chakra came to be hallowed as

the power of Grace (Arul-Sakti), activating the five energising Saktis.

Para Sakti -

the energising all-pervasive inherent Sakti in Siva

Adi Sakti -

the veiling Sakti of creative existence which conceals its true form.

Iccha Sakti -

the samsara Sakti who relieves the souls of all impurities.

Jnana Sakti -

who controls the sustenance and preservation of the Universe. It makes known the 'pros and cons' of the impurities that cause misery and activates, the consciousness of souls to follow the right path

Kriya Sakti -

directs the activities of human beings and creates the environment to enact the assigned round of deeds according to the law of action and reaction, cause and effect.

In this way, the Supreme ParaSiva directs the five-fold activities whereby human existence gets involved in the living process which finally leads to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Siva's manifested form both as camphorated lingam and in the Saguna form of Somaskanda Murti, covered with fresh camphor, adorned with chrysanthemum flowers and blue lotus, with radiant Triple

Eyes, supporting Parasakti on his left side and Skanda in the Centre, evokes from His worshippers, the prayer of the heart. Tiruvarur Devaram Cantos sung by the illustrious St. Sambandar, St. Appar and St. Sundarar form a moving symphony of divine Grace.

The mystery of Tiruvarur Unfolded

In Formless, Transcendent-Immanence, Parasivam manifests in the Ajna Cakra between the eye-brows, the omega point of Resplendence. He revealed His Somaskanda Thiagarajah form to Maha Vishnu's Ajna Cakra, the locus-centre and Vishnu experienced the vision of Śiva in the Ajaba rhythm of his life-energy-silent, tranquil upheaval and withdrawal as in the steady movement like the swan. In the Heart-Centre of Vishnu's body is located the Daharahaasam, the serene and ethereal space-centre where ParaSivam shines in natural effulgence, Svyamjothi, the splendour that attracts earnest seekers and mature Seers of Truth. It is also termed the chid-akash or the luminous centre of Pure Consciousness of the form of SatchitAnanda.

Lord Siva in the Form of Sri Somaskanda conjoined with Sakti and Skanda embodies to concept of Sat, impregnated in the Sri Cakra as the Bindu Point, the heart-centre, from where emanates the Chit-Sakti or luminous Consciousness. This marks the union of Kameswaran (lover) with Kameswari (beloved) and bliss epitomised in the form of Skanda (Guhan). Siva's manifestation as Thiagarajah connotes King of sacrifice, seated on the Simhasanam throne, supported by Sadasivam, His Gracious Energy and propeller of the fivefold activities. His form inspires humanity to confirm to the Divine Will in surrender and sacrifice, for on such purified consciousness shines the luminous Sivam. To a seeker who can penetrate the layers of worldly consciousness, lies revealed the

inner Radiance of Siva in his Vidyaswarupam. It is the Sri Chakra Form embedded in the heart-centre of consciousness (Chid-Akash) and has necessarily to be hidden and not exposed to outer view. To those who are attracted by the objective world, the wonder of the subjective world is not known.

In the Awareness of Supreme Consciousness, in the resonance of the ajaba luminosity, imperceptible and inaudible, the world with all its extraneous intrusion disappears. The Indweller of the heart-centre, in the form of Somaskanda-Thiagarajah imprints His luminous form on the seekers and devotees, whose respiration is controlled like swans. Hence Lord Thiagesan is called "Vidankan", the controller of the Hamsas (Swans). "Veethi" is the prefix to His Name and it signifies the Sushumna canal which is the royal path of illumination from the Muladharam to the Ajna centre in the human body, where the swans freely wander. He who brings under His Power these life force "birds" (Hamsa) that move in this pathway is called the Veethi Vidankan. This indeed is the mystery of the Oli-Neri, alluded by Tirujnanasambandar, in his famous Canto on Tiruvelukutirukai. It has also reference to the luminous Path revealed to the Four Ancient Sages by Adi Dhakshinamurti, the Primal Siva-Guru and which leads to the establishment of the true self state - Tan-Nilai - Siva Realisation.

The significance of the luminous Path (Oli-neri) needs further elucidation. It is only in the effective control of the outgoing breath to turn inwards, towards the centre of light - Hamsa vibrating as Soham - that interiorisation and integration can take place. This process is symbolically envisaged in the Sapta-Vidanka Kshetras (Temples) where ParamaSiva as Lord Somaskanda-Thiagarajah performs the internal dances, such as the Ajaba dance and the dances of the Yoga Pathway with the psychic centre opening out in

succession. In this way, the lord performs the yogic rhythmic vibrations of the Lotus Dance, the cock dance, the Mount dance and the Wave dance. The Kundalini Yoga practised by Siddhas and Yogis demonstrates the outwardly directed evolving process reversed to unite with the Sahasrara centre and merge in unitary consciousness and bliss, with the Cosmic Self in integral harmony.

The outward process which is Hamsa and the inward process of the life-breath as Soham are concurrent and reaffirmed as the creative union of Siva-Sakti, symbolised for ritualistic worship in Sri Somaskanda Form at Tiruvarur.

It is the experience of Being in Consciousness that is signified in Somaskanda's internal dance rhythms. Consciousness as Being is enacted in Tiruvarur by Veethi Vidankan, whereas Consciousness as becoming is experienced in the cosmic dance of Sri Natarajah in Chidambaram, unfolding the manifold acts of manifestation; and both aspects give a perfect experience of the whole. Thus ritual and meditation lead to the knowledge of harmonic whole, having gained which, one attains to Supreme Felicity.

The Devaram Seers have affirmed in their experiential Cantos that the spark in each one's innerself is undimmed by the flame of Siva's luminous Grace and the light of Siva-Sakti instils the power of cohesion and self-realisation, that could integrate diverse forces of division and harmonise all differences. Divine Grace infuses peace and bliss into all seekers who espouse the Luminous Path leading to the Omnipresent and Omniscient ParamaSivam.

"The Eye that scintillates its radiance over the
worlds, We praise;

The shafts of wisdom irradiating their effulgence
within the inner core of Being - We praise"

- St. Appar:

The Chit-Sakti Form embodied in Thiageswar's Svarupa is the Sri Vidya explication. In Sivajnana Siddhiar which contains one of the finest exposition on Siva-Illumination, the Author Arulnandi Sivam extols the radiant grace of Siva-Sakti in freeing humanity from the pangs of bondage:

"The Divine Will of Grace, potent with love, -
knowledge, power
and bliss sets in motion the divine acts of
origination,
sustentation and resolution of the Universe;
assuming luminous Forms, Formlessness and
Form-Formlessness
it manifests as the Lord's Resplendent Consort,
giving birth to countless worlds and inexpressible
forms of life,
eliminating their impurities and endowing them
with flawless
plenitude and felicity. My Mother conjoined to the
Father dwells
in the hearts of devotees. Her fragrant Feet of Grace
I place on my head".

Tiruvarur Thiagarajah radiates Sivagni - self Effulgence. Sivagni embraces sun, moon and fire and illumines from within, hidden from the gaze of the worldly tainted beings, but experienced by the illumined sons of wisdom as SatchitAnandam.

Forms, Names and Symbols are aids to spiritual illumination. The language of the soul is one, intrinsic in essence. The Expression may assume different vibrations, extrinsic by nature. The same sweet harmony prevails in the Cosmic Dance of Nadarajah and in the Ajaba Dance of Thiagarajah.

To see oneself and to see all as converging in the luminous Eye is the primary object of all spiritual practice. Tiruvarur is the objective symbol of the internal Sivagni.

Be still and ponder. Participate in the ajaba rhythmic movement of Thiagarajah in the external plane at Tiruvarur and in the internal plane, in the heart centre. The Effulgence of Siva radiates the flawless refulgence of the para-vak.

Chapter 13

OLINERI - THE LIGHTED PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

"Oli Neri", the path of light, leads to an immediate, deep insight into Reality that is beyond reason and logic - It involves spiritual intuition, direct knowledge and realisation - It is beyond sense perceptions, beyond thought. Intuition implies direct perception, and connotes higher consciousness, and looking within. St. Thirujnanasambandar composes a Self-revealing Canto for his aged father to curtail his daily elaborate ritualistic worship, where he distinguished the essential from the incidental and adopts the natural way of Light to focus on the Essence of Being. The Litany is known as Tiruvelukutirukai of forty seven lines, where the worshipper concentrates on the subjective aspect of experiencing the Self Effulgence of the transcendental Parasivam.

St. Thirujnanasambandar extols the luminous Path that leads to the light of wisdom through the gateway of God-Experience.

"Under the banyan Tree with Thy twin luminous
Feet You revealed to the Four, the illumined
Path of Wisdom and with Thy triple Eye dispersed
all darkness".

In another context, the child Saint sang the famous Ode to Siva as Tiruncelakandan, where he praises the Lord who upholds

righteousness and prays to intercede on behalf of his faithful devotees and protect them as he did the Devas of old by sucking the poison and giving them the ambrosia of immortality.

"O Lord of Righteousness,
All-Perceiver, whose triple Eyes never wink;
We have sought refuge at Thy Feet,
That adamantine unholy pursuits harm us not,
O Tiruneelakandan, Be our witness".

In the luminous Path, everything is lustrous and so Saint Sambandar invites all seekers of Truth to follow this Great Way. Attributeless, Self luminous and Blissful is the domain of the Shining One. His Abode at Kutastha, the space between the eyebrows can be reached by meditation. The Self Luminous is not required to be unfolded. He is here, there and everywhere in resplendent Form. But the one who wants to see Him will have to purify his power of comprehension and unveil the screen over his mind's eye. When one's inner sight is released, the Supreme is perceived everywhere. The vision of all being is the vision of diversity, while the vision of diversity, while the vision of the luminous Self is the vision of Oneness. When both the outward and inward sights are unfolded, then the Self is seen in all things. When outward sight is fully turned inwards, the Self Luminous ParaSivam is perceived, nay experienced. This is the state of Pure Being, pure Consciousness and the vision of the Pure Self emerges in dazzling brilliance:

"In Him are all beings, the Eye that oversees".

The Param Jyoti, the Primal Effulgence sees all things at once in their diversity and in coincidence. Dr. Ananda Cumaraswami in Vedic Exemplarism states that "the divine procession is coincident"

with the birth of the light of the Sun, who as creative energy wears the visible forms of things (Visvarupani). The Sun is thus the single form, that is the form of very different things, all of which are in his likeness, as he is in theirs, without in any way depending on them". Brihadaranya Upanisad affirms (1.4.10) that the pure act of being implies that "to be" and "to know" are the same thing. It became the All. Only one Sun is present to one and all. That which is only One (Transcendent) becomes the manifold (immanent). Here we perceive the Divine "Anugraha" (Grace) at work. The central consciousness (Sakti), this inherent power of ParamaSivam releasing potentialities to action is conceived as Light - "Thou art the omniform Light, irradiating all, knowing all, creating all in an all embracing Love-Grace".

Now is the time, in the midst of crisis upon crisis, for man to arise from disorder to order, and become aware that although he feels powerless in the midst of overwhelming chaos, he nevertheless can create the inner purity and clarity to restore the contact with the ever-fresh and ever vital Energy that is Sakti. This is the gist of the Oli-Neri formulated by our Hindu Seers in a continuous line of tradition. In the New Testament, in the first letter of John, he enjoins 1.5.7.

"God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all,
If we walk in the light, as He is in the light,
We have fellowship one with another."

The Luminous Way of St. Sambandar

It is noteworthy that the earliest forerunner of the Saiva Tirumurais, St.Thirujnanasambandar, in his mighty feats of combating the forces of darkness at Madurai in the Royal Court of the Pandian King and Queen Mangaiarkarasi, pointed the Way of light

that leads from multiplicity to unity, from the shadow of semblance to the light of Reality. We shall recount the famous "Anal Vaadam", the Fire-contest where his opponents failed because they were in the grip of their "private wills", and were not freed from the phenomena of things; whereas the protagonist of the Saiva Pathway, St.Sambandar had related his will to the Supreme Will and his knowledge of "name and form" was purged in the coincidence of knower and known. Far from enacting a sporadic miracle, St.Sambandar's approach to the problem created by his opponents of alien faith and creed was one of understanding the true inter-relationship of the One and Many, of God and man in integral unison.

The episode of the Fire-Contest and the Water-Contest had a great impact on the subsequent development of the Saiva Religion in South India from the seventh century A.D. right down to the modern times. Sambandar had cured the Pandian King of a fell disease by the efficacy of the Holy Ash Decad, that he sang in the august assembly and thereby nullified the Jain monopoly in the Pandian household and in the Kingdom. However the Jain hierarchy tried to hoodwink their befogged defeat by challenging to a Fire-Contest, the young son of Siva, whose single minded faith and clear consciousness was rooted in the Luminous Siva-in-Sakti; had they not heard his cry at the age of three, on the bank of the sacred Tank at Seerkazhli and fed him with the milk of ambrosial wisdom?

Sambandar accepted their challenge, whereby each of the opposing party would inscribe an edifying ecologue from their scriptural Text and commit the scroll to the special Fire lit for this purpose. The party whose scroll resisted the flame would be declared the champions of Truth. Little did the petulant opponents realise the subtle action of the fundamental Agni (Fire) at work,

deep within the "being" of this child-seer. It is 'Agni' who brings about the change of consciousness and effects all kinds of transformations. How is the overpowering movement of this "fundamental agni" as Sri Aurobindo describes the subtle action of consciousness within, brought about? The Seers with one accord acclaim that we have to disentangle the false vibrations and chaotic sensations in order to release the free movement of the fundamental agni from within. It is the ultimate stage of the energy of consciousness. Therefore, by manipulating the consciousness, one can manipulate energy or matter, and transform matter into energy.

Therefore if one understands the substance of energy(agni) or of consciousness, one can manipulate matter by the subtle heat of the life-energy or vital agni, which is acted upon in differing intensities. The illumined Seers of the Hindu Dharma knew that the divine unity of the world is made up of a single divine substance, without which, no transformation would be possible.

St.Sambandar demonstrated to the world, the secret of the transformation of matter into energy by enforcing the working of the fundamental agni on the spiritual plane. He agreed to the contest by fire (Anal-vaadam); he took out his cantos on Tirunallaru Temple of Siva, where the God is worshipped in the half male and half-female form of "Arthanareeswara"; and committed to the blazing fire, the palm leaf scroll on which was inscribed the ten cantos he had sung, extolling the immanence of Siva with His Sakti, inseparable and gracious and manifesting in manifold forms. We give two verses from this Decad, which Sekillar, the Author of the Lives of Sixty three Saints entitled "Periyapuranam" makes reference as the "ever green scroll".

"The Lord in attractive non-dual form of male-
female,

who is Arthanareeswara, inseparably supporting
Beautiful Umadevi and riding on the Bull chariot,
Who is girt with the deer skin and loin cloth,
Fastened with the serpent coil, He is our sovereign
Lord

Who abides in the Temple of Tirunallaru."

- Tirumurai 42.2.1

Siva quaffed the poison and held it graciously
In his throat, so that the world of Devas and Asuras,
Be saved from annihilation. Indeed it is His
Splendour

That manifested as an effulgent pillar of light,
Which even Vishnu and Brahma could not measure.
Who could gauge the greatness of our Lord of
Resplendence?

His dwelling place is the blessed Temple of
Tirunallaru."

- Tirumurai 42.2.9

The bard of Seerkazhli fame took out this scroll and set it in the
raging Fire and invoked the Luminous Siva as witness, that the
flaming agni should not consume the Truth of His Word. So it
happened. He evoked the power aspect of consciousness conceived
in Saiva Agamas in the image of the Eternal Mother and Consort
of Siva.

"The radiant and lustrous daughter of Himavan,
Uma

Whose scintillating form is held in close embrace

by Him,
Whose brilliant flashes beam in Tirunallaru Abode.
Glorify His Holy Name, the Essence of which shall
remain unscathed,
Even if committed to raging fiery flame.
This is Absolute Truth."

- Tirumurai 42.3.1

"Immanent with the fawn-eyed Sakti by His side,
Displaying her iridescent multi-phenomenal powers,
That shall infuse the heretics with terror and fear
And make them flee before His resplendence true,
Siva's beatific Name shall destroy the falsehood of
Jains and Buddhists
And shine in unsullied purity untouched by
mounting flames".

Sambandar blazed the glory of Siva, when the Jains whose scroll was immediately consumed, acknowledged their defeat. The wonder of this spectacular victory was that Sambandar's scroll appeared fresh and ever-green and thereby established the supremacy of Saivism in the Southern Territory and vindicated the truth of the fundamental power of Agni - in other words, the inherent gracious power of Lord Siva. Siva-illumination follows the trail of exceeding love of ardent devotees, whose Awareness is awakened by direct experience.

That we too may attain the peak of experience of the young illumined Seer, Sambandar, we recall the fourth Anuvak of the Taittiriya Upanisad and join in the chorus:

"O Agni, You energise luminous thoughts in me,
Luminous thoughts outside me.

**Let my thoughts move in balance and tranquillity,
Let me enter the thousand secrets of agni
(consciousness)**

**O agni! Thou art the resting place, shine on me,
Move towards me (Let me become supremely
conscious)."**

In the episode of the Fire contest with the Jains, Sambandar established the truth of the "light within" as an inexhaustible source of energy. Truth is the most spontaneous basis of existence. "In the vital centre of the heart is a point of convergence, the psychic centre which is the self of fire, the only true self in the world - a conscious being which is the centre of the self." Katha Upanisad IV.12.13., IV.17 unfolds that "It is the sun-lit space where all is for ever known". Such awakened Seers prove the truth that consciousness is the means, the key and the end. The light within man and the light that is in the sun is one and there is no other. All is eternally one with the Divine.

St. Sambandar reveals an expansive self-illumination, where self-attainment implies an increasing consciousness of the indivisible oneness in all creation. The Luminous Eye of Truth opens in us, the vision of the illumined self within. Sambandar's invocatory canticles as he faced the fiery opponents of his faith and creed bear witness to the reality of his intuitive Gaze, which has seen all and experienced all. It partakes of the formidable glance of the Luminous Siva who burnt the asuric fortress of Tripura, typifying the dense darkness of the three impurities of egoity, delusion and attachment to one's actions. It is His Luminous Gaze that consumed the lustful Kaaman (cupid) and reduced him to ashes. Sambandar's mellifluous verses charged with the power of Siva-

Sakti set at naught, the wounded gloom of the hazy disconcerted Jains who complained against Light.

The Child of wisdom sang on the effulgence of Siva in buoyant strains of love that could confront boldly the gloom of hate; his harmonised vibrations drew in the resplendent rays of pure light and effected the transformation of the material scroll into energy that defied the fury of the flames. Here is a grand display of the Reality of the divine-human bi-unity. It is the Third Eye of Siva which sees all in a single beam. It is the immeasurable GAZE, the vision of love and wisdom, Siva in Sakti, where all separations melt away. The Third Eye of Siva is Truth-Consciousness, and by His luminous GAZE, each being, each force and each thing moves towards its centre and realises the truth of being.

The Discovery of the Self by the self

The illustrious Seers have left for posterity, their experiences of the unique power of an undivided vision which is really one with each thing. It is the feeling of all in each and each in all. They have shown us that the path of light Oli Neri - leads to the full seeing of Truth. "Nokariya Noke nunukariya Nunnarve ..." "Meijnanam mahi Milirkintra meichudare." Sivapurānam 1.38.76. Therefore if we walk in the lighted gaze of ParamaSivam, we shall begin to see not just the physical objects, but the vibration of energy and light and the spiritual substance of which it is made. We realise that we are one in a point of light. Intuition is a memory of truth, and in the stable light of consciousness, one discovers only oneself. It is the cry of the soul: "Chikenapidithen" "I hold Thee tight, O Luminous Siva! wherefore can you part from me?" In the unitary consciousness dawns the vision of unity and love supernal.

St. Tirunavukarasu, a contemporary of St. Thirujnanasambandar also validates by direct experience, that no longer can there be separations, voids or rights to those whose eyes have been illumined by the luminosity of the Lord of Thillai.

"Now that the light of my eyes has mingled
with the luminous Resplendence of the radiant
"Father-Mother" at Puliyur-Thillai, all other
lights have been eclipsed and I see His
Effulgent Self alone."

- Koyitiru Viruttam

St. Sundarar who followed in the trail of the luminous light of Siva after St. Sambandar and St. Navukarasar, evokes the rasa of wonder when he regained his physical sight at Kanchi Ammai-Appan's shrine and offers his undying servitude before the Self Luminous One at Ekambam.

"He is the wish-fulfilling Tree-Kalpataru,
He who subjugated the sensual Kaaman,
He is the Three-Eyed Siva, essence of wisdom,
Who dispels dense darkness by His radiant Grace.
How can I ever forget Him and think of aught else?"

- Tirumurai VIII

Arul Neri - The Blazing Path of Grace

"Magnificent is the light of Grace - Arul Perum
Jyoti.

Peerless is its munificence - Thani Perum Karunai"-

- Thiru Arud Pa

Tiruvalluvar in his immortal Tirukural testifies that the plenitude of Grace is the most excellent of all grades of wealth. It is the quality of benevolent good will, the spontaneous outpouring of natural compassion to all fellow beings. While Siva is love incarnate, Sakti is grace infallible and is endearingly referred in all scriptural Texts as the Eye of Grace - Arul Kann.

St. Ramalinga Swami became steeped in the light of Grace, which illumined all his prolific compositions known as Thiru Arul Pa - The Poetry of divine grace.

"Thou art Majestic Grace, Mount of Grace, O Lord of Grace who enacts the Cosmic Dance of Grace."

"Ambrosial Grace! The Fount of Felicity, the deep wide sea of Grace. O Eye of Grace, the light of Devas. The soul of Dharma, O Triple Eyed Siva of scintillating Grace, - 219, Supplication to divine Grace.

In Tiru Ahaval on "The Light of Grace", Ramalinga Vallalar projects in meticulous, soul-stirring similes and metaphors, the play of Grace within his own being, enlivening his experiences and illuminating his life.

"You are the Eye of mind, my two Eyes too art
Thou-
Nay, the lustrous gem within my Eye too are you!"
1433-34

In the silence of deep meditation, with fixed concentration and without attachments, the great Saiva Peers, popularly known as the "Four Elect" have sung on the splendour of Siva's luminous Grace and Ramalinga Vallalar recalls their experiences in this direction.

**"Let me live in the holy and purified company of the
enlightened Seers
Who have enshrined the light of Grace in their
whole being,
and offered their all-in-all in surrender to Thee,
Lord of Arur
Outside thy ken (sight) are those who cannot SEE
through the Eye of Grace".
- St. Appar VI.252.1**

**"Who can fathom the profundity of the luminosity
of Siva's Grace"?
"His Eye of Grace lights up the totality of beings",
affirms the wise sage, St.Thirumular in Tirumantiram VII.95**

**St. Tayumanavar takes up the refrain on the oceanic depth of
Siva's Grace and his own wanderings in the maze of gloomy
self-consciousness.**

**"He bade me see with the eye of Grace but
unknowingly
I began to see with my limited light of egoistic
knowledge
I saw nothing but dense darkness all around
In which gloom, I saw not even myself,
What wonder my friend is this?
- Ananda Kallippu 13**

**In contrast to this plaintive cry of humanity groping in ignorance,
Ramalinga Adigal rejoices in the powerful panacea of Grace
lighting up his existence:**

**"It is the elixir that springs from pure Consciousness
The golden elixir that cannot be valued by one and
sundry;**

**It is the elixir that bestows infinite felicity
The elixir that streams from His Eye of Grace into
mine".**

- Tiru Arudpa. VI Ananda Kallippu.1

In a unique approach to Siva as luminous light, the Sage of Vadalur sees His effulgence in the firmament of Grace, transmuting every fibre of his consciousness into shafts of illumined knowledge Arivozli. The only qualification demanded of him was to shed his "Anavam" or egoistic propensities in order to immerse fully in Siva's lighted Presence of Grace. His cantos reflect the beauty and grandeur of experiencing Bliss, in the same strain of ecstasy as that of St. Manicavasagar, his mentor, who so experienced it and transmitted it to the world in Tiruvacagam. In Mahadeva Garland of Praise, Vallalar sings joyfully:

**"In the pinnacle of Jyoti Hill I saw Thee,
My eyes rejoiced - In awareness serene, my eyes
See nought but Thy Light of consciousness - (Arul
Chit Jyoti)**

**It is the light of Truth, the light of Justice,
The light of purity, the light of Righteousness,
Such is thy luminosity Supreme that immersed me
in Bliss".**

**"He reigned supreme from my mid-point eyebrow.
In His luminosity like that of the camphor flame,
I see no smoke, no flickering but steady vision.
He unleashed the closed gateway of my mid-eye**

And liberated me from darkness to light everlasting.
It was all His sport, glorified in the sacred lore."

Ramalinga Adigal's body, mind and thoughts surging with love, his soul and essence all illumined by the Self-luminous Siva, the dawn of the Sun of Grace never coincided with a sunset for Vallalaar, as he mingled in ParaSivam's luminous Bliss - Sivamayam was Olimayam with him:

"It is resplendent Light alone that fills the vast
cosmos,
It shines perenially in the microcosm as well,
Dispelling all trace of darkness in the inmost core
of beings.
The world comprehends not, O sweet maid, arise
and see It
The majestic splendour of His Radiance, all-filling.
The Agamas with one accord proclaim the Truth of
Self-Effulgence".
-Tiru Arudpa VI-145

In bliss, the soul experiences inseparable unity with Siva, having rid itself of the triple bonds of delusion, attachment and egoism; its whole being gets illumined with divine wisdom. This is the significance of his soulful benediction-

"Ellaam Sivamayam, Ellaam Olimayam",
"Omniform is luminous Siva, Omniform is
His Effulgence."

The symbolism of light occupies a pre-eminent place in the sacred Scriptures and canonical Hymns of the Saiva Seers. From our response to light comes the realisation of Parasivam in His

transcendental glory, and in His benignity with the world of animate and inanimate beings. Ramalinga Swami followed St.Manicavasagar who had worked out the symbol of Light. He equated it with Siva's Grace and Wisdom in many a psalm in Tiruvacagam:

**"In Grace unto me, you dispelled my darkness,
Your effulgence lights up my heart as yonder
 morning sun,
Thy mode of rising, I comprehend not by thought.
There being naught else but thy luminous self,
 atom by atom,
All things great and small change and merge
Into Thy luminosity, Siva, Dweller in the holy
 shrine,
Though you are not in this and that in separation,
 Yet are you
The essence in all. Whoever can know Thee?"**

- 22.7

At Tirukalukuntrum, Manicavasagar alludes in poignant grief of his separation from the devotees of Siva, whence He bestowed His Grace by revealing to him, the vision of His radiant Feet. From the inertia of gloom he woke up to life eternal. He assures the world that no more can dire distress afflict one after such purification in Siva's luminosity. "You revealed even to my lowly self, Thy imperceptible glorious Form".

"Kaanonaa thirukolum Nee Vanthu Kaadinaai."

Our dim sense of falsehood and I-ness shall wane little by little, as nearer and nearer, we draw into the orbit of His splendour, with

the light of Grace emblazoned by Ramalinga Vallalar in his monumental Tiru Arudpa.

"O Effulgence that relumes my heart
To the intensity of my yearning do I melt.
Perfect Fullness, Flawless Ambrosia,
Mount of endless flaming Light supernal,
The luminosity of Truth that wipes out falsehood,
Thou expanse of matchless Splendour."

- Decad of Grace 29

In soaring love, St.Ramalinga Adigal sings exultingly on the transcendental quality of the spiritual spark that gleams within him in fadeless bliss. In the Sixth Tirumurai Cantos, Vallalaar soars in an ecstasy of intense devotion to super-conscious Awareness, as he intuitis infinite Bliss wherein his inseparable relationship with the Arud Perum Jyoti - Supreme splendour of Grace - stands self revealed. "Draw me to Thy golden Effulgence in deathless union."

In his Supplication Ode, he sings buoyantly on The transforming grandeur of Radiant Light - Jyothi:

"My eyes revel in the morning glory of Jyothi,
What glowing sights are revealed to me by
wondrous Jyothi!

It is Jyothi that lights up heaven and earth
And illumines me from within, Imperceptible
Jyothi!

Pure Effulgent Jyothi art Siva-Jyothi so resplendent,
The Jyothi that crowned me with a dazzling diadem
And immersed me in the splendour of Justice.
May the Jyothi of Radiant Light transmute me
wholly

And merge me in His luminous Effulgence. Bliss
supernal!

The Jyothi of Grace, this suppliant beseeches."

The Cosmic Vision

The sage of Vadalur Ramalinga Vallalar addresses his soul to arise from the sense slumber of unreality: "How far have you and I moved away from the disenchanted, ephemeral permanency of the objective world to embrace the warmth of the energising eternality of the Radiant Lord of Thillai?" The Luminous Siva inseparably yoked to Sakti reveals the Truth to the realised Seers. Mahabharata rejoins unequivocally on the role of enlightened Seers:

"Dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam
Mahajano yena gatah sa panthah."

"The secret of dharma lies hidden in the cave of the heart. The path is that by which the great ones have gone ahead."

They urge humanity to attain a sublime synthesis of life by looking within as well as see the external expression of Truth in the world outside.

The eternal source of light symbolising divine wisdom, illumines man's life at every point. Therefore it is necessary to replace the role of the machine with the spirit of the individuals who are the most faithful image of God. The luminous Eye of Siva is the witness and awakens man from the stupor of arrogance, vanity and inertia, to a sense of responsibility among human beings towards his own existence, guided by the light of divine grace.

Siva's gracious Eye attracted me to His effulgent Presence, illumining me with rare wisdom. Who can know His immeasurable immensity of perception?

- Sivapuranam

The first trace of God is found in the form of light. There are two aspects of Brahman - nirguna (formless) and saguna (form). The whole activity of the world is carried on by Divine Energy emerging out of His saguna form. In nirguna state, the energy is latent in Him and no action is perceived.

We note that in the opening verses of Genesis, reference is made to the earth that was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said "Let there be light, and there was light."

We live and move and have our being in the all-pervasive cosmic harmony, and Hindu Seers have expressed this cosmic harmony through the Vedas, Agamas, Tantras, Upanisads, Tirumurais and Tirumantiram. "He who realises that God is the be-all and end-all is the real Seer". Man's ego (the sense of separate I-ness) makes the indivisible God appear to him as divided and this is the cause of all the turmoils in the world.

The vision of all beings is the vision of diversity and the vision of Self is the vision of Oneness. The physical eyes see the outward objects and self is seen by the inner eye. When both the outward and inward sights are open, then Self is seen in all things. When outward sight is fully turned inwards, the pure intelligence form of Soul is perceived. This is the State of Pure Consciousness or Awareness. Pure perceptions are Spiritual in character. In this state, all beings are perceived in the Self, because all beings are forms of

Divine Energy. *"The cosmic vision born of the luminous contemplation of the One", (Rg Veda x.190.1) and of man's place in the cosmos has stood the test of time. It is evident that motion and stability are the ingredient factors of divine harmony.*

"The Seer beholds that Being in whom all find one single home; in That, all this unites; from That, all issues forth; The omnipresent is the warp and woof of creation."

"Where spiritual and ruling powers move together in unity, that world will I know as holy, where move the shining ones and Agni, the flame divine"

- Yajur Veda 20,25

The Eye of Siva is the symbol of the cosmic harmony, the omniscience of Śiva, and man by uniting in himself the poles of manifestation can integrate himself in the harmony that spells real happiness and bliss. The luminous Eye of Siva signifies the inherent harmony of all things in this all-knowing, all-willing and all-seeing light, and man's approach to this fundamental equilibrium will unfold his experience of Truth, which is the very breath of the Divine. Jnanam or pure knowledge and light or luminosity (Jyoti) are one in essence. Anma-Jyoti is self-knowledge that knows its own lustre as well as penetrates by its radiance, all external objects. It is also termed the knowledge of Truth, changeless and eternal.

Isavasya Upanisad chimes the same resonance,

"Being the Truth, constant of all, omnipervasive, foundation of all existence, It outstrips all others which challenge to outstrip it. Even so, its presence is

sufficient to bestow energy to all cosmic movements.

- 4

"Whoever intuits the living base of all existents in the Self, which is the pervading principle, and the pervading principle in all existents, by intuiting the unity does not harbour any illwill or hate." - 6

"Such a person by realisation of identity of being is virtually the Self of all and pervading his life is all light. He has no scars (of mind or greed or hate). Neither is his muscles frigid". - 8

Kena Upanisad intones on the inextinguishable light which is eternal, perfect, and gives rise to bliss everlasting.

"There the sun does not shine, neither the moon nor the stars, nor lightning. Then how does this Agni - the luminous Siva shine? The Self-luminous shines and everything shines after Him in full luminosity."

It is Svyam Jyoti - natural resplendence that is most subtle in lustre, inherent and self revealing. It is pure consciousness or Siva Jyoti. It is prajnanam, indwelling in the pure soul, ambrosial in essence. "When all living beings are in deep slumber, in the darkness of night, you alone are awake in jagrat state, ever awake with thy luminous Eye gazing and darkness fleeing. "Nallirulil nattam payintraadum nathane." Siva's dance continues unabated, when the world is plunged in darkness. His Eye of Grace and man's sadhana to attain pure consciousness aids in the realisation of His all-pervasive glory of illumination.

God is Self luminous. Sakti, His inherent Energy is the life and soul of all visible and invisible objects. Sakti is the Supreme Radiance of the Lord of the Universe. The Self-luminous is not required to be unfolded. He is every where in resplendent form. But the one who yearns to see Him will have to purify his power of comprehension and discern His inner sight. When his mental sight is opened, the existence of the Universal Mother (Sakti) is perceived everywhere. To See God, one requires the power of distant vision, subtle vision and divine vision to penetrate our eye of knowledge. All the spiritual practices are meant to evolve the Sakti within. Thus God's Radiance is spread everywhere but unless I acquire divine sight, I cannot see Him. Sakti signifies immanent Sivam in active state signifying the divine act of Grace. She is regarded as the Universal Mother, being inseparably inherent in Siva - "Mother of Millions of world clusters, yet virgin by the Vedas called".

Chidambara Swamigal sings of her resplendence:

"My head I crown with the lotus Feet of Sivakami
who with the Absolute is inseparably blended
As sun and ray and gem and lustre
Who cures the life-hunger of all living things
with infinite bliss and in freedom's Being
establishing".

Tayumanavar addresses in many soul-stirring Odes of intense beauty as the "Mother who yields all that the heart desireth - Light and Bliss of knowledge Supreme. Cosmic Force manifests where vibration ceaseth." In obeisance meek, he pays homage of love to "That Fullness which shineth everywhere, full of Grace."

Chapter 14

THE LUMINOUS GAZE - CENTRIPETAL AND CENTRIFUGAL

The Radiance of Siva's Luminosity

The world and all living beings reflect the radiance of Siva's luminosity. This communion of all in the present, past and future, including knowing, acting and intention states, converge at mid-point in luminous radiance. Creation and preservation pass through the phases of dissolution and obscuration and the divine Word points to the Divine Presence. The evolution of the Tattvas is reduced to a process of union with Siva. It is the Coherence of majestic Oneness in the words of St. Sambandar - 'Orumaiyin Perumai'. The Love of Siva meets the love of man in the luminosity of the Third Eye. His Omnipresence embraces the nucleus of the world itself. It is the ever expanding movement of perception that sweeps away the obscuring veils that hide the vision of Truth.

The unmanifest penetrating the manifest, the transcendent becoming immanent, the paravac becoming fused with the nāma-rupa power of words, typify the centrifugal force of the Eye of Siva. It is the perception of the Divine Omnipresence and Omnipotence. Man gifted with the eye of grace can experience the luminosity of the Triple-Eyed Siva with Sakti by His side.

The Third Eye effects a great metamorphosis that makes one shed one's murky vision and see in His radiance, the innermost depths of obscurities in which man lives and has his being. Man needs to have an internal gravitation to be drawn to the Divine Will, symbolised in the Third Eye of Siva. While the left and the right eye represent the moon and the sun, the eye in the centre connotes the potency of the Will of Siva emanating rays of luminous consciousness - the midpoint where Sakti unites with Sivam, in the union of Icchai or Love. It is a coming together of kinetic and static aspects of Sakti, which ensures the ordered movements and processes of preservation and dissolution. In the universe and in man flow currents of energy moving towards mysterious states of transformation and man's role in the world's Evolution is to utilise his own reserve of energy, in consistency with the totality of the universal energy.

The activation of human energy is seen in the working of the internal organs of the human body, as well as in man's environmental confrontations and in the affective and volitional processes, leading to the illuminating knowledge of the infallible laws of the cosmos. Man's consciousness which tends to be dominated by separation and assertion has to be brought into the gravitational orbit of universal consciousness, as exhorted by St. Sambandar.

"Uma conjoins with Thee in Thy gracious Form,
They (devotees) experience the truth of your Grace.
The wise scorch with aversion the sensual desires
Your flaming Eye burnt the lustful Cupid
Your gracious act is to conceal my imperfections.
The celestials carry out your bidding.

They rejoiced in the birth of the Divine child,

Kandan.

You favoured the city of Brahmapuram".

As Rudra Siva, the Eye effects the Samhara activity, where His consort looks on as a witness. After dissolution, the veiling power of Sakti is at work transforming the primordial matter to new forms and shapes. Here the Dance of Siva is significant and His anugraha stage of the left uplifted foot marks the phase of Divine grace at work. There is the physical structuring of matter with psychic inwardness extending to layer upon layer of consciousness. The Eye of Sivā unravels such a rise of consciousness and interaction of insights, where matter and consciousness, nadam and Bindu coalesce, leading to acts of creation, preservation, destruction, veiling and anugraha in endless succession.

The axis of Cosmogenesis revolves around the evolution of the thirty six Tattvas. The process of Involution is a movement of the Divine Will and gets started with the opening of the Third Eye. The evolution of the Tattvas is reduced to the process of union with God in the knowledge of Love. The moving principle of 'Tiruarul' or Grace, ever expanding the frontiers of man, sweeps away the veils of darkness and ignorance that hides his vision of Truth. Grace is an efficacious healing power to regenerate and sanctify man and suffuse him in brilliant light so as to shake off his maladies and find strength and peace.

"In between the eye brows is the space

If you gaze at it, there emanates light"

- Tirumantiram 2770

The different forms of light that we see in the universe are all illumined by the immeasurable eternal light of Siva's effulgent Grace.

"When Devi connived in sport to shut the Eye
of Siva,
Dense darkness shrouded the universe.
In grace extraordinary, He opened His flawless
Mid-Eye
And illumined the world in benevolence
The resplendent Siva is the source of all luminaries"
- Sivajnana Siddhiar 1.2.24

The opening stanzas of Tirumantiram dwell lingeringly on the Eye of gracious bliss, dispelling the many obscuring hindrances of toiling humanity:

"He mingled as life of life deep within,
And revealed His peerless Eye to disrupt the
mortal bonds"
- Tirumantiram 113

The whole world reflects the glory of the crimson Light of Sakti. The Saiva Tirumurais enjoined that as long as man hankers after sensual pleasures, His Eye of grace will remain closed.

In order to obliterate the attraction of worldly pursuits, the moon's cool beams shine on His forehead. If man concentrates in Dhyanam, on this 'Ajna centre', the mind's wayward flights of imagination cease. He who is ignited by the Jnana-Eye of Siva knows the intricate working of the law of causation and effect. He who so perceives knows himself as well as Sivam.

In Sivajnana Siddiar, Arulnandi Sivacharyar enjoins that such "a realised jnani sees the whole world in himself; he sees Siva in himself and as life of all living beings and all-pervading". In Tirumantiram is described Bindu as Light. "In its movement, none can see its cause, though it is fused with nādam, as one in my heart".

By their Yogic insights, The Nayanmar lament that the world does not know that Grace in essence is omnipresent. To those who know its essence, grace tastes like nectar. The grace of Siva represented by the Third Eye sees everything in totality and simultaneously. The Truth-Seers know that Arul-Sakti becomes the Eye (Arulkann) and sees all in unison.

The Astral Temple of Siva

It is self evident that those whose eye of grace (Arulkann) located on the forehead and known as 'ajna chakra' has not been opened, cannot perceive the causal, subtle states of the all-pervasive Sivam and Sakti, Nādam and Bindu, permeating as the causal embryo and seed. The Ajna centre on the forehead is described in the Saivagamas as the astral temple of Paramasivam.

"Straight within the forehead,
Between the eye brows
Is the astral space vast.
Peer, peer within there,
The luminous mantra (aum) will be the place
Where they in yearning sought Him."

- Tirumantiram 2770

An understanding of the concepts of Time and Space is essential. They are considered in their two categories, transcendental and empirical. Infinite Time (Kālam) is an ultimate principle, with and

without form. It consists of unitary oneness and yet has divisions. It puts forth the cycles (Yugas) of cosmic life.

It pervades the entire cosmic experience. It is the universal ground which sustains and reveals the cyclic acts of creation, preservation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. Time and space cannot be conceived independent of one another and they form an inseparable duality.

Space according to the Agamas has positive qualities like 'sabdam' or cosmic sound (nādam) which is the essential quality of space. It is on account of the activating energy of Sakti that the nama-rupa forms and names commence to evolve and finally dissolve. Limitless are her manifestations in the category of Siva Tattvas viz., Nādam, Bindu, Sadhākya, Isa and Vidya, extending from gross matter to the subtle. Infinite is her display of power.

The mind cannot conceive without Sakti's inherence. It also cannot imagine the whole of Sakti's powers and neither can the eye perceive the entirety of space. Therefore man must conceive space as both manifest and unmanifest. Manifest space has attributes of empirical reality to the gross organs of sense perception in their normal state, but unmanifest space cannot be directly apprehended by the gross sense organs. Manifest space as conceived in tangible objects can be within the purview of man's attention, but not the unmanifest space which pervades grosser manifestations.

Parasivam and Parasakti are beyond Time and space framework, and they are the substratum for both Time and Space and therefore not delimited by it. Unmanifest space has no dimension, direction or position. Great Yogis and Seers assign arbitrary measures to direction and position of ideational space. Any finite measure can at best be only a conventionalised representation.

When Siva manifests Himself as a Cosmic Dancer, an effective representation is taken as a basis - the Dancing Sri Natarajah is a God-Cosmos form in relation to Time and Space. It is couched in mystery of what lies beyond the limitless expanse. The Form of the Dance of Siva is a transcendental object of worship, and we learn to view the cosmos symbolically for the manifest - unmanifest. Manifest space can only be interpreted through the awareness of its implications of ideational space in totality. Lord Siva by His dance guides the dormant souls from darkness to light. The Right Foot compresses the prostrate demon who symbolises the phenomenal existence. The compressed Foot stirs him from the tamasic state to regain the vitality in order to get rid of the domination of the senses and rise to sattvika serenity. He shakes off the gloom of relative experiences of the waking, dreaming and the dreamless sleep states. They are passing phases of life, transient in nature and hence the cosmic Dancer with his uplifted Foot of Grace aids man to transcend the phenomenal tri-phased existence. By His Anugraha Sakti, consciousness is transformed to pure awareness by the flow of His Grace, and His benign smile and half closed Eye assures the aspirant to the crowning experience of bliss. This is known as the Dance of Bliss.

St. Appar extols the energising Dance of Bliss of Siva as Thillai Ambalavan, in the mellifluous Decad on "Koyil Tiru-Virutham".

"In great distress, the Devas and Indira, their leader invoked the Lord's adorable Feet, as their sole refuge. Thereupon, Siva swallowed the poison emitted from the Sea of Milk and granted them the ambrosial elixir of immortality. In Mount Kailas, when disturbed by Manmathan's arrows of desirfulness, He opened His Radiant Eye and scorched him. Those who have im-

bibed the light of His Effulgent Eye (Virupaksham), as He performs the Dance of Bliss at Thillai-Chittambalam have no need to see any other sight in this empirical universe".

- Tirumurai V.8

The Eye of Siva is the focus of fixed attention and contemplation for mankind. They should resort to His Supreme grace to attain liberation from the complexities of life. Siva holds the deer in one hand. The mind is like the deer and has to be held in check. It must learn to derive equanimity by fixing its constant gaze on the benign face of Siva. He sounds the drum and universal vibration takes place, followed by creation. The mystic sound is God in potential form and the aspirant repeats the Name of God and becomes attuned to the cosmic Will of Siva. The blazing fire in the other hand symbolises the purifying aspect, which burns up impurities and in the spiritual plane, it signifies Divine knowledge. It consumes the human element in man with his karma and anava malam reduced to ashes, while the flame represents the knowledge of Siva and the enjoyment of Supreme Bliss.

The Eye beatific and serene maintains the equilibrium in the midst of oscillation. The Dance of Siva depicts the five-fold (pancakrytiya) activities of Siva in the vitalisation of matter, harmonisation of life in His benign smile, concealment and destruction of the asuric elements and getting converged into the organic unity by the uplifted foot of grace, in the organised arch of space, Chid-Ambaram, the forum of the Dance. These powerful, dynamic five-fold activities emerge under the transforming radiance of the Eye of Siva, the synthesised form of spiritual energy of Siva-Sakti. The divine setting is in reality the coming together of Nādam and Bindu

in the flawless, dynamic Eye of Siva. It radiates a supernal power to unite all beings in its embrace.

The Third Eye also indicates in the popular myths, the Rudra aspect of dissolution (Samhara) and the witnessing Sakti (Lotus) in union of power and grace. Siva quells Kāma, and His Eye remains half closed taking in the sidelong glance of Devi, watching His Dance, rejuvenating Kāman, burnt by the fiery glow of His look. While the cool waters drop from the Ganges on His head and with the crescent moon's silvery light, He extinguishes the flame and rejuvenates Kāman, and Devi's grace transforms the passionate Cupid, watered by her love. The Tripura Asuras which are the three bonds (malas) in each human being can only be destroyed, when Siva opens out His Third Eye and scorches them.

There is also another verity concealed in this myth. The three gunas in their interaction blur the vision of Truth. So they are classified as asuras who have usurped the place of Reality. The goal of the aspirant is to transcend the interplay of these three Gunas. When perfect surrender is made by the suppliant, then Siva opens out His intuitive Eye and awakens his yogic insight and the three vanish before the illumination of knowledge. The Tripura may mystically mean the destruction of the three 'malas' of man. When he reaches the stage of inner illumination known as 'malaparipagam' and 'iruvinaiooppu', he is ready to receive the grace of the Lord. This is illustrated in the puranic episode, when Siva was accompanied in a chariot drawn by Brahma with Vishnu as his arrow, agni as the barb, Yama its feather, the Vedas formed the bow and Gayatri the bowstring and then one wheel sank on his way to destroy the 'Tripura'. Without the benediction of His Grace, any amount of careful preparation on the part of Devas and mortals could be of no avail. Finally, the radiance of His Third Eye flashed

and His benign smile devastated the Tripura. His Grace alone can relieve loads of evil and minimise the powers of egoity, karma and maya and unveil the clouds of unknowing from the interior recess of man's being.

The Luminous Eye symbolises the red lotus and the blue lotus of Siva and Sakti, signifying destruction as only a prelude to creation - the mother of the world on one side and the father of the universe on the other. The moon crescent typifies self sacrifice. Though Siva destroys Kāma and Kāla (yama), he rejuvenates them through the crescent moon and assures the eternal march of time. All is transmutation and rejuvenation effected by ParaSiva, the Auspicious, Mukkannan - the Triple Eyed One.

The perception of the Divine Omnipresence - The Third Eye of Siva - is essentially a seeing. It is fully to experience the atomic attraction of Siva in Sakti, and the final unity of 'being' enfolded by His infallible, peerless Grace.

The Radiant Son of Siva

The effulgence (jnanam) of Siva-Sakti gleams through the radiant Son Kumara - Muruga, enthroned in the heart of many Truth-seekers. It is the vision, seen and unseen. In Siva is the Eye of Wisdom - that luminous Eye on the forehead of Siva - effulgent, radiant as if a thousand suns are blazing forth. The divine rays flashing from the flawless Eye herald a new dawn. It is the dawn of Light from darkness. It is the dawn of light from the darkness of primordial matter in its latency. It is the dawn of life from death, actuality from potentiality.

The Triple Eye is the first formal assumption of God-head as Being, God as Siva. An Eternal Will pulsates and translumes the

undifferentiated into the differentiated, the unmanifested in the manifested.

The Absolute Sivam effects nothing in Himself and Sakti is His active power engendering, preserving and resolving in His Light. In the Triple Eye, the Tri-Unity converge - Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. The Will of Siva is the moving power in all procession. 'Iccha' is the will to life. It is by His Will that His intrinsic Form (Svarupa) reveals His intrinsic nature (Svabhava). Therefore the Will of Siva may be regarded with respect to essence as the Being, and with respect to nature as Iccha leading to kriya or action.

Kandapurānam, the most popular of the Saiva Puranas, elucidates the significance of the luminous Eye of Siva in the section on the birth of Skanda. The Will proceeds as divine sparks of brilliance from out of the effulgent Eye. The connascence of the Father essence and the Mother nature, the two Forms of Para-Brahman is not a generation from conjoint principles. In the beginningless beginning - in principio, the world was without form. God-head was rid of light and darkness, poised in itself is sable stillness.

There arose the fiery energy and rasa (elixir) from the luminous Eye of Siva, and sent forth lustrous sparks, and agni (fire) with the help of vāyu (air) carried them to the bosom of the waters. Skanda, the son of Siva-Sakti is established on the Saravanai Pond. The Will of Siva brings the six aspects in the possibility of existence, together in one manifested form, and thus emerged 'Kandan' with six heads and twelve hands, the Divine child, the Saviour of the fearful mortals and celestials and the destroyer of asuric forces of evil.

The effulgent Kumara is perpetually brought to birth in the sacrificial fire at the dawn of every day, as also at the beginning of every temporal cycle. The supernal sun, the fire and the motion are

the fundamental aspects of the imperishable Word - Om. The light (Aditya-Sun) in Heaven, of motion (Vāyu) in any firmament and the earth as the principle of fire (Agni), known in puranic tradition as Lord Vishnu, Brahma and Rudra, are the embodiments of the transcendental Brahman or Para-Sivam (God-head). The sun is the source of life and vayu is the breath of life. The gift of life radiates from eternity to eternity and no manifestation is conceivable except in terms of pairs of opposites. Neither good nor evil can have any place in pure being.

The birth of Kumara or Muruga is a symbolic presentation of the operation of power or energy. Symbolism is the language of the metaphysics. The symbol presupposes that the chosen expression is the best possible description or formula of a relatively unknown fact. The everlasting Godhead is unknown, never was known and never will be known. The supernal image of the Son Kumara (skanda) is revealed in the traditional symbolism of the birth of Kumara from the Dynamic Eye of Siva.

Siva is known as "Triambaka and Trilochana" - The Three Eyed. The third Eye is not physical nor is it visible. It is spiritual and intuitive, signifying transcendental knowledge. The intuitive Eye of Siva is open to the sadhaka, who can sublimate his senses and intellect. He who conforms his will to the Divine Will becomes an instrument of the Divine and he perceives the totality of Truth, at the Omega-Point of union of Siva with the power of Sakti.

"The moment, He became my inner light
That moment, I crossed the sea of desire.
The moment, that I starved my preying senses,
That moment, they fled helpless from me!

Ego annihilated, 'I am'-thus play we Thonnokkam".

- Tiruvacagam 15.14

Man must arise from his sense-slumber and begin in faith and love to gaze intuitively at the Eye of Grace - His Shaki will grant him insight into Truth, so that whatever he does will have the ring of reality, born of sacrifice. The futility of all acts of man on earth can be combatted only in sacrificial service to God in Love.

Siva is self luminous, brilliance personified. Man cannot perceive His effulgence because the veil over his mind's eye has not been removed. The Self luminous is not required to be unfolded. His Third Eye's luminosity is everywhere in resplendent form. But man who wants to see Him will have to purify his power of comprehension and unfold his inner sight. All great seers invoked His grace to open their eye of knowledge. When mental sight is unfolded, the existence of the luminous Siva is perceived. Worship of the Supreme Radiance of the Triple Eyed Siva known as 'Triambaka', who impels our minds and intellect to action, effects the transformation of the elements and faculties into radiant energy, culminating in Supreme Felicity. So sang the Vedic Seers.

"Tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim push

tivardhanam

Urvārukamiva bandhanāt mṛtyor muksiya māmṛtaḥ

We worship the Three-eyed Lord who is fragrant and who increasingly nourishes the devotees. Worshipping Him, may we easily slip off from death as the ripe cucumber easily separates itself from the binding stalk. May we never be separated from Immortality."

- Sri Rudram 12

Chapter 15

THE LUMINOUS EYE - THE GREAT MYSTERY UNRAVELLED

The Truth Seers raise the question - By what does the intellect get activated and the vital forces with all the senses carry out their respective roles? They have provided the answers: The joy of living is in understanding the mystery of life. Man must get beyond the borders; beyond the vital force and the senses and discover what acts through them. He discovers the light that shines through them. He turns to the subtle inward expression of consciousness and feels the same essence at work everywhere. The intense spiritual consciousness (Prajna) is the witnessing light that plays through all experiences.

It is important for us to feel the point of this light, the heart of all existence, in whose gaze, the transformations come and go but we remain constant. The truth of I Am dawns on all alike and the basic note of life is transcendence. With clarity, steadfast faith and concentration, understand the mystery of the immortal self. Everything comes and goes in the cosmic world, but we should learn to enjoy the enduring and collapsing by turns and focus intensification of our consciousness. The revelation of light comes through the seeming revolution of objects. The expanding universe is to be felt as a part of the expanding consciousness and this realisation unfolds

a fruitful insight into life process - an intuitive understanding of world existence.

Remember that Jiva is body in consciousness; Parameswara is universe in consciousness. So without body and universe, both Jiva and Ishwara remain as consciousness. When consciousness contacts matter, it gives rise to knowledge, while consciousness contacting consciousness gives rise to love. Open the portals of your inner chambers and let in the rays of light and you enjoy both world perception as well as the divine light within you. Love is the means for effecting the understanding of the mysterious process of consciousness contacting consciousness. The more you know the self, the more you love the world and the self within.

When the light of Awareness becomes diffused, it becomes shadowed and appears on one side as object of perception and on the other, as the Seer of perception. Light can be a Revealer only by getting reflected and by casting shadows. Without minute particles in the atmosphere, light will have no content to be caught by the eyes. Behind each particle is a subtle shadow which marks out the path of light, the form of object held in it. An unreflected cannot be seen by anyone. Atman is unseen light. But being reflected in an experience, while it casts shadows of objectivity, it is known as revealer or perceiver. By seeing the process of perception in an intrinsic way, we can come by an understanding of the unprojected pure nature of the Atma. What results from such a deep intrinsic understanding is bliss - Ananda Valli - Taittiriya Upanisad.

What is this Bliss of which our Seers have eulogised in all their works? It is the crucial link, the recognition of the Jiva-Siva concord - the I experience in the God experience. We have given sufficient evidence from the Sacred Texts that throw light on the experience

of unification of consciousness. It is the intuitive approach to Reality, that leads to the experience of Prasanti, a poised awareness arising out of the depths of one's own self. It is an experience of oneness with Sivam and attainment of divine equipoise, that we witness when we study at first hand the experiences of St. Tirumular or that of the Saiva Saints. How do they affect us? We examine ourselves. What are we now? Some form of Ego or Aham-kaara. We realise that by understanding one's ownself, Aham-kaara (Ego) can be reduced to formless self - just aham. The samvit fire has burnt up its fuel by intensifying one's meditation on Samvit nature, and the essence of pure consciousness manifests itself.

The Luminous Eye of Siva has awakened the interior eye in us. True worship on our part should be an expression of Love. By the power of love, the worshipper invokes the light of consciousness, Samvit, the fire to which karma is the fuel. How then can we worship Samvit? By offering the fuel of karma with great devotion, purity and reverence, because it is the fulfilment of the Self-luminous Siva. One experiences as did St. Manicavasagar, Aham without kaara. One gazes at the power of Pure Consciousness and know it as blissful. Samvit is the Effulgence of Para Sivam, the radiating splendour,

"Param Param Jyothi Parane Potri" -

"O Light, Most sublime, Adoration to Thee"!

Incorruptible, visible in things with and without
forms,

O Transcendent, adoration."

The Effulgence is the ground of conscious existence which supports all things and reveals them. Having understood the substratum, one can intuit the Self continuously, everywhere. The

magnitude of space is as great as the magnitude that is my-self. Let others not recognise my-self, but certainly, I myself know myself. I do not lose self-recognition, though my self-expressions are countless. The process through which one realises the supreme Truth of Siva-in-Sakti, myself in Him-Self is what is termed parabhakti - intense devotion. By sacrifice and surrender, the initiate consigns all the forms and objects that pertain to the body, its manifold transactions with the world to the unchanging flame of the Luminous Siva who illumines All on the time screen of Now - the Eternal Present. Everything attains blissful fulfilment. We sight however faintly and feebly the beams. They are the Upanisad Seers, Arjuna, St. Tirumular, the Naalvar, and a host of shining ones returning to the Sun's Orb, merging in the light of ParaSivam. By continual Gazing rapturously within himself, by the power of Nidhidhyasana, the earnest aspirant recognises the 'I', his true self, as the light of the Self, who is none other than the luminous Siva. It will not be long before he attains, like the Sages and Seers on whose footprints, he had walked, to a state of freedom from all externality and becomes immersed in the felicity of serene devotion and light of love.

It is certain from all the external and internal evidence of the Realised Lovers of Para-Brahmam, that meditation on the luminous Eye of Siva should lead one to ineffable Peace and divine Bliss. Firmly rooted in Anandamayakosam, they revelled in Anandam - Bliss. Therefore constant awareness proves indispensable. Be one with the Luminosity of Siva in and through His Will, that is the inherent power of Sakti. Be in love with the Essence and not with the names and forms. Experience love at all times, and pour your oblations - the purnahuti, in the Samvit Fire. His Luminous Eye does not wink even for a split second, and so, bask in his radiance.

The Secret lies in one's capacity to embrace everything through Love of the Luminous One, and thereby expand ad infinitum in the scale of Paramanandam, as in Anandavalli of the Taittiriya Upanisad: "Unsurpassed Bliss is Brahman. The unit of immeasurable Bliss is the attribute of Para-Brahman". Brahman enjoys the Bliss of His own essential nature; Brahman is one of beginningless wisdom, and exists through eternity.

"In the beginning was this light. Then the forms were self-made and belonged to existence; being infused with existential essence, they become blissful. With the manifestation of light is the process of self multiplication initiated. Both the darkness or space and light, as life or consciousness belong to the Power of the existence itself. They both contain the essence of Paramatman, the Supreme. The quantum of bliss experienced is determined by the extent of the movement of the Prana and Apana upholding all formations by mutual inter-action. The embodied consciousness overcomes the limitations placed on it by the various sheaths of anna, prana, manas, vigjnanam etc., and moves inward when it gets established in absolute identity with the existence. Only That exists. In all other states, there is duality. When one has entered into the experience of light or life, in its existential infinitude, his Bliss assumes the infinite dimensions of the existence itself.

The Sun is all light. Our ego-consciousness is darkness. When we see that light within us, before which the sun's light loses its illuminating power, by entering into a state of Samadhi, our consciousness attains

immeasurable bliss in the presence of the splendour of the HiranyaGarbha or the centre of his being. Such is the wisdom of the Seers on tasting the existential essence in forms of "Cosmos".

Ananda Valli - Taittiriya Upanisad.100-104

The Records of personal experiences of our great Sages reveal the 'soul' of the religious impulse and contain the fundamental validity of direct knowledge. It is derived from the mysterious background of pure consciousness and it is in their experiential Records that the essence of religious truth stands revealed. The objective world is not separated from the observer. All natural phenomena are understood in terms of human experience, while human experience is viewed as a natural phenomenon. Every natural happening is personified with a specific will of its own. The symbol of vision as the third Eye and the thing symbolised as the Luminous Siva-Sakti are embedded in a dynamic relationship, where the symbol actually shared in the being of the thing symbolised.

In this way symbolism proved effective and implied action rather than knowledge. Man experienced these integral relationships. Thus myths and symbols embodied truths, as they were actually lived. The degree of reality of a thing depended upon the intensity with which it affected feeling, thought and will. Rituals form a part of the cosmic events and man acts his preordained part in cosmic life and realises the need for greater co-ordination between himself and the play of natural forces. It is the whole man, imaginative, intuitive, emotional and volitional who experiences these dynamic relationships and affinities.

In this context, we recollect the illumined experience of St.Tayumanavar who forged a harmonic union with the Luminosity of Siva in his opening Decad:

"What is that which is not here nor there,
But shineth everywhere as resplendent Bliss?
What is that which wills millions of worlds to rest
In the luminous space of its grace and is the
 life of life?
..... It is that all-seeing, all-pervading,
Light of harmonic stillness, the Divine Will, in tune

with mine -
To that, Let us bow in lowly worship".

**"In the midst of permutations, what remaineth is
It - It is
 Grace, the birth place of the inseparable, Supreme
 Effulgence.
 O perfect All-filling Bliss, O Splendour!
 On It we meditate".**

The discovery of truths common to the deepest experiences of a spiritual character in every great religious tradition is mutually reinforcing and strengthens the case for a priori recognition of their validity by those who have not yet shared in the experiences.

St. John's Testament in the Gospel discerns the beauty of light thus :

**"And the Light Shineth in darkness; and the darkness
comprehended it not**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was
John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of
the Light,

That all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness
to that

Light. That was the true Light which lighteth
everyman

that cometh into the world". - 5 - 9.

The Luminous Eye of Siva emits scintillating shafts of light in
St. Manicavasagar's Opening Canto in Tiruvacagam.
Sivapuranam, in Praise of the Self-luminous Siva sung at sunrise
and sunset in every Hindu home, embodies the Splendour that is
Para Sivam.

"Thou Enlightenment true! Light eternal and
manifested,

I know not how to extol thy infinite glory

Thou breath of Purity, who fills me with Grace

So that all things false and fleeting might flee,

Light of wisdom, irradiating

Luminous sparks of radiant Truth!

Bliss art Thou, O Lord, and Goodness true,

before whose Splendour, my deluding darkness flee.

..... Purest Light eternal,

Emanating sparks of beauty manifest,

My Indweller Siva who leads me to the highest goal.

..... Resplendent Light, potent darkness

Unseen Light, concealed within

The hearts of those who seek Thee not

**Invincible Effulgence serene,
Deluge of Bliss irresistible
Luminous Splendour of Creation,
Unutterable Insight Thou!
Blessed are they who in obeisance meek
Realise the wealth of attainment
Beneath the Adorable Feet of Siva".**

There was nothing hidden from his vision and as the Essence and Nature of the Auspicious Siva, the world and his soul unfolded with crystal clear translucence; and the peerless Manicavasagar bursts into a magnum paeon of soulful adoration in Tiruvacagam.

In his mystic Ahaval of "Tiruvanda Paguthi - The Rhapsody on Siva" - Manicavasagar extols the revealed and the subtle relationship of the Lord of Radiant Splendour with the world and his gracious interplay with the soul:

**"He endows the sun its illumination
And gives the Moon its exhilarating coolness,
In the mighty fire, He kindles the flaming heat
His pervasive power, He places in the ether.
..... Thus He infuses to each its own essential nature"
- 20-27.**

The Self-Luminous Siva gleaming with the Triple Eyes is the poetry of Existence, the illuminating beam of knowledge and the beauty of Bliss. How does He reveal Himself to His true devotees? His Revelation conveys the unutterable bliss that fills the interstices of the poet-mystic's whole being.

and man. Incommunicable is the bliss of commingling of "being with Being". It is only by intense love and faith, that man can surrender his will at the touch of Divine Will and establish a magnetic relationship in harmonic unicity and peerless purity with ParaSivam.

What follows this Great flawless Experience? With sparkling buoyancy, the illumined Child of Light, Manicavasagar recaptures in sublime poetry, his spiritual awakening. What he sees with the Eye of Grace is transmitted in the Tiruvandapahuthi Ahaval with tremulous awareness :

"Rejoice in exultation. Adoringly, with fresh
flowers 142
Weave the garlands and lay at His fragrant Feet.
Bind Him by invincible offerings of worship.
Encircle Him, enfold Him in love's clasp,
Dogg Him intently and leave Him not
Though He eludes your grasp, hold fast
As He will not yield to your clinging.
The Incomparable One, Self Luminous is He
who made visible His Form even unto me,
In the company of manifold witnesses;
He trumpeted His coming to make me His own.
A Sage He came with Grace to bide with me.
Love undying dissolved my bones and tears
Rolled profuse like the glistening waves
That rise and fall in quick succession.-
In utter bewilderment, I rolled in frenzy
And reeled like a madman, a drunkard,
Till He chastened me and all around Him

Mercy's distilled sweetness illumined me
He suffused my being in bliss supernal,
He who eluded the quest of Brahma and
Vishnu. - 182.

This is one of the most authentic and elevating autobiographical intuitions on the experience of Siva-Realisation, by the Poet of "Ruby utterances". "Verily, I have SEEN the Self Luminous Siva, who effected such wonderful transformation by the light of Grace, and this is how I experienced His Luminous Presence", is St. Manicavasagar's verdict in Tiruvacagam. His illumined testament on The "inflowing and outflowing" luminosity of the Triple-Eyed Siva transcends thought, conception and perception. We hear at every turn, his answer to the resounding question, "Who are Thou?" - "The Sun thou art. Who I am is the light thou art". The Effulgence of Truth - "Meijnanam, Meiunarthal" scintillates in every pore of this being. 'The omniscience of the immanent spiritual principle is correlative of its timeless omnipresence'.

Ever since the luminous Lord pierced the "Seer with his shaft of realisation and awakened his inner eye, he was able to realise the divine grace as the greatest balm against the miseries of birth and death". 47.1-4. The unparalleled gift of the "unique Lord of Effulgence" to the awakened soul is that his interior being gets suffused with the light of His Grace - "Oruthan Perukum Oli" - 47.1.7. and is filled with inexpressible Bliss.

"Thy glorious splendour (Ellaam Sivamayam)
whom none
can experience save those that love". 4.2.1

In the song of Attainment, we see the illumined Seer, bereft of the corruptible and mutable nature, and infused with heightened

love, gleaming in the glory of Sivanandam - bliss infinite. He sees that all things in their time - illusion, events in life with its multi-faceted attractions and repulsions, have to be viewed in the light of the eternal Luminous Sivam - 49 - as expressions of Reality. In this unfathomable light of faith, man sees the world as It Is - "Chidānandarupam".

"Deva, deva! In thy Eternal Light (Paramcudar),
shall

we not experience Light"?

"Tam Santam achalam adhvayānanda Vigjnana
Kanaevaasmi."

"That Santa Murti, Immovable Brahman,
Indivisible Bliss

Pure Consciousness - That am I"

Manicavasagar's closing Songs in Tiruvacagam affirms That He Who is the peerless Splendour - Paramjothi - the radiant smile of the universe, will reveal the luminous Eye of Wisdom, Love and Bliss and will respond to the call to "love and be loved". It is this love of frail human beings that finally reveals the domain of light - Sivamayam. The soul becomes as if it were, a star caught in a flood of sunlight!

Chapter 16

THE SYMPHONY OF LOVE AND LIGHT

The symbolism of Light plays a significant role in Tiruvacagam. From our response to light dawns the awareness of the transcendental splendour of the Luminous Parasivam and His immanent, expansive Refulgence with the world and soul. The light of the Sun betokens a symbol of supreme benignity, the factor of heightened vitality blended with the subtler yearning of the spirit. As man ascends higher and higher, brighter and brighter beams the luminosity of Sivam. It dispels the darkness of gloom and ignorance. Param Param Jothi, the infinite splendour appears to a man in love with the light of the Sun of Grace, as the light of Truth and the light of wisdom.

"All-pervasive Expanse of Light that spreads
over all"22.8

"Weary I feel, seeking thy gleam of fadless bliss."
32.1

"Thou who changeth all to ecstatic bliss,
My light divine" 22.9

The symphony of love and life is played by St.Manicavasagar to highlight the rays of illumination that emanate from the Luminous Eye of Grace, and thus rekindle the flame of the freedom of being:

**"Who can gauge the height of the Supernal Bliss
Serene**

**That circulates in and out from the Luminous Eye
of Para Sivam?"**

The dynamism of love links all life with all beings and all beings with Siva. This is to live in the infinity of Sivam. The unparalleled gift of His love is the reward of a transfigured Seer who perceives the luminous Eye of Sivam everywhere.

**"The Lord of Perunturai has His abode in the inner
core**

Of my being and lighted it with love.

His light has rid me of suffering dire

And banished darkness from my ken.

What blissful fulfilment I experience".

The Society of the Good includes the society of all who live the infinite life in the world at large, a world full of radiance lit up by the Triple-Eye, where finitude, greed, selfishness and idleness recede before the all-pervasive 'Parancudar' infinite radiation of infinite Existence. This light outstrips the speed of relative light in Time and Space, and supercedes all finite concepts of 'matics and metry' in the space-time continuum.

Infinite Existence being all-pervading and omnipresent outbeats all empirical phenomena which speed through time and space. It is the substratum for all cosmic movement and also its profound silence. It is the core; it is inside; Also it reaches beyond all frontiers of the universe in its outward-going dimension. The four sanctified Saiva Saints who poured forth their oblations of Love offerings in the fullness of infinite living experienced no fear, no egoity, nor delusion of like and dislike, as they saw Siva's shaft of light in their

own self as well as in all existence. Such illumined inseparability in consciousness is the gift of insight from the luminous Eye of Siva.

"The pure gem's wordless music shall such joy
yield:

Shall it not be?

The light that hides within my soul shall rise in
effulgence;

Shall it not be?

The manifold phenomena no longer clouds the
Lords's vision;

Shall it not be?

Experience unchanging, unknown before shall
unfold so;

Shall it not be?

- Tiruvacagam 49.7

Here is an instance of a man of God immersed in the radiance of the sun of Siva.

"His luminosity pervades deep within my inner
being,

As well as outside of me".

So sang the bard of Tiruvacagam, in his lyric of Attainment. It is the wonderful vision of Reality. In the unfathomable light of faith, man sees himself and the world in the indivisible Presence of Siva's Splendour. 'He is all that is'. The refrain in each stanza, "Shall it not be?" sheds a lustre of fulfilment.

**"O Lord! In thy luminous Light, may we be
immersed
in light, Shall it not be?"**

Once the Omniscient Lord has taken possession of his inner being, and enfolded him in the empire of purified consciousness, the pageant of life flits past the intuited eyes of Manicavasagar, and transmutes his whole being into a state of transcendent vitality. In the immediacy of his attainment of fulfilment, he communicates the unerring way to infinite living for all mankind in the last six Decads of Tiruvacagam.

In the Pilgrim's Song and the March to Victory Ode, the bard of divine utterance intuits non-living and living beings, as intrinsically united with his own being, supported by the substratum of the Triple Eyed infinite Siva. His Garland of Blissful Joy vibrates with the rhythm of tranquil contentment and serene fulfilment, as he mediates the supernal bliss of infinite Living. He makes us participants in the rasa-leila pure awareness radiating unalloyed bliss. From the pinnacle of Truth, his stirring call to follow the great Pathway must be heeded by all Hindus and oppressed humanity.

In the footprints of the enlightened Upanishad and Agamic Seers who followed the Perunthurai pathway, Manicavasagar's psalms breathe of eternal values in infinite Being.

**"He stood on earth, His luminous shaft shot forth,
Thus, He linked Himself to my thought,
Great Perunturai's Lord"**

- Holy Lyric 47.3

In the fullness of infinite Being, there is no error, no denial, no opposition. In the unity of Existence, there can be no intrinsic evil

as all is Supreme Truth. This is the Upanishadic vision of Siva as "Santam, Advaitam, anantham." The Luminous Eye of Siva awakens the slumbering man from the dream of the dark night of the soul, the probation, the prelude to find his own real self, set clear and safe in new light and new life. In a moving Ode, Manicavasagar, brings out the consummation of life's fulfillment:

"O Triple Eyed one! Thyself with Sakti I saw
My eyes spelt delight
Countless days and nights without thought
On it alone, I ponder" 33.9

The Bard of Varthavur addresses Siva as "the flaming Lamp of brilliance! Radiant Form of Grace". It reflects the spirit of resignation to the divine Will of the seeker, whose all abounding love craves for the attainment of freedom in its infinite dimensions of Sat, Chit, Anandam.

The vision of the infinite Truth is veiled from man's finite sight. "Chidambara Rahasyam", at the Temple of Sri Natarajah in Chidambaram emphasises the need to regain the intuitive light emanating from Siva's mid-Eye. The Truth of the five-fold activities of Lord Natarajah as the Cosmic Dancer, and the hidden meaning of the glittering vilva chain dangling in ethereal space of the dark chamber of Chit-Sabai symbolise the link of the manifest with the unmanifest. It can be perceived only by the illumined light of His Grace. All outward distracting lights that blur the auspicious gleam in Siva's Third Eye must be withdrawn, so that a truth seeker can see the resplendence of his own self. It is Self-revelation. The centre Eye bestows the light of Siva's Grace to the pining soul, and he experiences Siva's revealing bliss in excelsis. "If the revealing

light of the Third Eye transmits a gleam into one's eyes, then who will not see?" asks the saintly Appar.

The Eye of Siva as a Power-Centre of Grace occupies a unique place in all the Sacred Thirumurais. The Lord is addressed in manifold terms of Light, scintillating and diffused, originating from His Mid-Eye.

"The ray that surpasses speech and content."

"The effulgent radiance that gleamed in the sea of
devotion"

"The expansive Light that reveals my inner being"

"Who can experience thy Glorious splendour
except those that Love".

"His benign gaze signals Supreme well being and
dynamism".

"The God-Guru appears to a ripe seeker, as the light
of Truth and the spark of Wisdom".

"All-pervasive through earth, heaven and nether
worlds,

Oh Thou expanse of light that spreads over all".

Finitude meets infinitude in the scale of Being and heightened consciousness in the Sacred Cantos of the Saiva Seers. It is a transmission of the total experience of living in infinity in the auspicious light of Siva.

"My Light of Truth!

In darkest gloom, I stretch out to Thee

How Can'st Thou part from me now?

.....

Incomparable One, that art the spark of my Soul,

Thou who illumined my path to the goal of Truth,
That I may shine in Thy Grace, in stress and strain,
My Peerless Love, on Thee I lean and cling.
Whither can'st Thou part from me now?

- Tiruvacagam 37.4.5.

The single flame of consciousness, Siva's Mid-Eye reveals the perfection of ineffable bliss, the Supreme fulfilment of living in infinity. The experience of supernal Bliss of the realised Hindu Seers can only be felt but not expressed.

However, the Effulgence that shines from time's beginning shall continue to illumine the universe of Being and Consciousness by Parasiva's revealing light. The Saivite viewing the Luminous Eye vertically sees in it his inseparable union with the divine Presence, while in the Horizontal dimension, it leads to genial associations with the faithful devotees of Siva, who see Him in everything, everywhere. In this composed state, the Saivites shed their narrow limitations of selfhood and expand into the radiant presence of ParamaSivam. To inherit His grace, they must abide by His Will. They have to surmount at its most sensitive point, the ego-centric I-ness, which is at the basis of all imperfections. This is the true spiritual perspective of all ardent Saivites:

You gave yourself to myself
And took over me and mine, O resplendent Siva!

Tiruvacagam : V.10

It is the perpetual remembrance of the Beneficent Siva, His name and His Acts, that constitute the symphony of Siva-Sakti. His Divine 'Svabhava' is what it is, and is expressed by the Name. His Luminous Eye as Divine Will on the other hand, projects into the world all-pervasive and differentiated, and corresponds according

to the complexity of human nature, and the stages of man's inner development.

Man seeks at every moment of his timed existence on earth, the timeless actuality of the Divine Presence, and blessed is the seeker who has seen the Luminous Eye and attained His felicitous illumination in non-dual union. The whole creation moves, and so moves too the human caravanseri to the supreme goal of the Bliss (Paramanandam) of Siva, illumined by the Ever Refulgent Eye of Siva.

St. Avvayar in her famous Vinayaga Ahaval bids adieu to the world, illuminating the whole world with the luminosity of Sivam by her Yogic Insight. The I-ness with its tortuous figments completely dissolved, in that Incomprehensible Living Light of such intensity, she awakens us to experience. This Being -- Sat Chit Ananda Sivam - as the True, The Real: Her last act of love before being lifted up in the white elephant to Kailash!

O Supreme Being, bright and Self-Luminous
Wish-yielding elephant, born of the Master
Of mystery in Mount Kailas!.....
You have come and entered my heart
Imprinting clear the five prime letters;
Set foot in the world in the form of a Guru,
Declared the final truth is this,
Gladly, graciously shown the way of life unfading;
With that unfailing weapon, your glance,
You have put an end to my heinous sins,
Poured in my ear uncloying precepts;
Laid bare for me the clarity
Of ever-fresh Awareness

Sweetly given me your sweet grace
For firm control of the senses five;
Taught how to still the organs of action,
Snap my two-fold karma and dispel
My darkness, giving out of grace
A place for me in all four worlds;
Dissolved the illusion of triple filth;
Taught me how to shut the five
Sense-gates of the nine-door temple;
Fixed me firm in the six yogic Centres;
Taught me the writ of Ida and Pingala
Shown me at last the head of Sushumna;
To the tongue of the serpent that sinks and soars
Have brought the force sustaining the three
Bright spheres of sun and moon and fire,
The mantra (ajaba) unspoken asleep in the snake
(Kundalini) and explicitly uttered it;
Imparted the skill of raising by breath
The raging flame of Muladhara;
Explained the secret of immortality
The Sun's movement and the charm
Of the moon, the water-lily's friend;.....
Discovered to me the subtle body
And the eight separate modes of being;
The orifice of Brahma opened
Given me miraculous powers
By your sweet Grace, and Mukti too;
Revealed myself to me and by your grace
Swept away accumulated karma;
Stilled my mind in tranquil calm
Beyond speech and thought;

Clarified my intellect, plunged me
In bliss which is the common ground
Of light and darkness
Boundless beatitude you have given me,
Ended all affliction, shown the way of grace,
Siva, eternal at the core of sound,
Siva Linga within the heart
Atom within atom, vast beyond all vastness!.....
You have added me to the congregation
Of your servitors true and trusty;
Made me experience in my heart's core
The inmost meaning of the Five Letters;
Restored my real state to me
And suffused me in blissful felicity.
O Master of Wisdom, Vinayaka
Your Feet alone are my sole Refuge."

Aum! In the Gaze of the Luminous Eye, there will be a blossoming forth and the process of ripening complete Self synthesised is the initiate who realises this perfect fulfilment - 'Who I am is the Light Thou art'.

Om

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